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THE

EXPEDITION OF ORSUA;

AND THE

CRIMES OF AGUIRRE.

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LONDON:
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THE

Expedition of Orsua;

AND THE

Crimes of Aguirre.

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE following account of an expedition and mutiny which Humboldt has truly called the most dramatic episode in the history of the Spanish conquests, was intended to form a chapter in the History of Brazil. To that history the subject in part belongs; but because it is entirely unconnected with all preceding events in Brazil, and with all subsequent ones, (the armament having only passed down the great river Orellana at a time when no European settlement had been made there,) I deemed it better to omit it altogether, than to insert an unfinished, and, for that reason, an unsatisfactory tale; or to increase the bulk of a large volume by pursuing the tragedy to its close, in a

part of America beyond the proposed limits of that work.

The chapter, therefore, was laid aside, and afterwards published in a periodical work.* It is now reprinted at the suggestion of some persons, who, having been much impressed by the extraordinary character of the story, were desirous of seeing it in a more convenient form. And considerable additions have been made, for the purpose of rendering it more complete as a separate publication.

Acosta mentions that a Jesuit who was in the expedition, being at that time a lad, wrote a full account of it. There can be little doubt that F. Pedro Simon, who has related the story more at length than any other writer, derived his information from that source, for he certainly must have had a full and minute narrative before him. The events which occurred after the mutineers landed in Venezuela

* Edinburgh Annual Register, vol. iii. part 2.

are detailed also by the Bishop of Santa Marta, Piedrahita. From these authorities the present narrative has been chiefly composed. Something upon the subject might be found in the *Varones Ilustres de Indias*, by Juan Castellanos, a sort of biographical history in verse; and perhaps more, in the History of Venezuela, by Oviedo y Baños: but I do not possess either of these works, nor have I, after diligent enquiry, been able to obtain them.

The history of this expedition, though often alluded to, is by no means generally known among the Spaniards themselves. Ulloa and his fellow-traveller D. Jorge Juan, and the authors of the Mercurio Peruano, speak of it in such a manner as to shew that they were very imperfectly informed even of the principal circumstances.

It is a frightful, but salutary story; exemplifying that power, which intoxicates weak men, makes wicked ones mad. This is an important truth, and has not been

sufficiently observed; but as the first part of the maxim is proved by Rienzi and Masaniello, so is the second by the fanatics of Cromwell's age, and the monsters of the French Revolution, as well as by the history of Eastern despots and Roman emperors. The pressure of the atmosphere is not more necessary for the animal life of man, than the restraints of law and order are for his moral being.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Fables concerning the Omaguas.—An Expedition fitted out for the Discovery and Conquest of El Dorado. Pedro de Orsua, Commander. He enters the Orellana, and is murdered 1

CHAPTER II.

D. Fernando de Guzman elected King by the Mutineers.—Transactions till his Murder.. 49

CHAPTER III.

From the Murder of D. Fernando de Guzman till the Arrival of the Rebels at the Island of Margarita..... 86

CHAPTER IV.

Aguirre seizes the Island of Margarita and murders the Governor.—Transactions till he embarks for the Spanish Main..... 102

CHAPTER V.

Page

Alarm in the Nuevo Reyno.—Aguirre lands at Burburata, and advances to Valencia..... 144

CHAPTER VI.

Preparations of the Governor of Venezuela.—Aguirre's Letter to the King.—Desertion of his Men.—His Death..... 168

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THE

EXPEDITION OF ORSUA;

AND THE

CRIMES OF LOPE DE AGUIRRE.

CHAPTER I.

FABLES CONCERNING THE OMAGUAS.—AN EXPEDITION FITTED OUT FOR THE DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF EL DORADO. PEDRO DE ORSUA, COMMANDER. HE ENTERS THE ORELLANA, AND IS MURDERED.

In the year 1560, the river Orellana became the scene of one of the strangest tragedies in American history. A horde of Brazilian savages, wandering first in search of some resting-place, beyond the reach of the Portugueze, and then flying before the enemies whom they provoked on their march, made their way, after a ten years'

travel, into the province of Quito. The Peruvian Spaniards were never without rumours of mighty kingdoms in the interior, abounding with gold, and offering as easy a prey as the great empire which they had already conquered; and a tale in confirmation of such hopes was bruited abroad, as the report which these Brazilians had related of their route. It was said that they had passed through the country of the Omaguas, and that they had found it full of large towns, in which there were whole streets of goldsmiths; they had been kindly received, and the inhabitants seeing iron in their possession, asked where they had obtained it; when it was replied, from a nation of white men with beards, who dwelt on the shores of the sea towards the east, the Omaguas made answer, that such another nation dwelt to the westward, gave them shields which were covered with gold and set with emeralds, in exchange for their iron, and besought them to tell those white men in the west to come and carry on the same

sort of trade with them.* Two Portugueze were with these wanderers, and it is not unlikely that they contributed to delude a people who were eager to be deluded.†

The first account of the Omaguas ‡ was that which Orellana gave of a powerful chief, whom he calls Aomagua, on or near the banks of the great river, in the upper part of its course. They were supposed to possess the richest and most civilized region by which he past; but their apparent strength was such, that he did little more than set foot upon their territories. The next reports came from Venezuela and the Nuevo Reyno. Felipe de Utre, one of the German adventurers, set out from Coro, in the year 1541, in search of El Dorado, which he believed to be the land of a people, whom some of the Indian

* Pedro de Magalhaens, quoted by Berredo, 1. § 84. Piedrahita, p. 1. l. 10. c. 5.

† P. Simon, 6. 1. § 2.

‡ See the History of Brazil, vol. i. p. 88. 587.

informers called Ditaguas, and others Omeguas. The story which he and his comrades told on their return was this. They came to a country called Macatoa, where the Cacique received them as friends, and becoming sincerely attached to his guests, entreated them not to proceed upon an enterprize so much beyond their strength; for the Omeguas, he said, were a brave and terrible nation, continually engaged in war, either with their neighbours or among themselves. They were not naked and timid like other Indians, nor could they, like them, be put to flight by a few horsemen, for they also had animals upon which they rode. They dwelt in large cities, and they had gold and silver in abundance; but for forty Spaniards to think of attacking them was mere madness. Felipe de Utre, however, was not to be dissuaded from his purpose; and the Cacique consented at last, with an hundred of his warriors, to guide him as far as the first settlement of these formidable people.

After five days' journey along wide roads, but through an uninhabited country, they came to a village containing about fifty houses, belonging, as the Cacique said, to some persons who were appointed to guard the plantations of the Omeguas, this village being one of their granaries. There was in sight also from the rising ground a town, so large, that though it was near them, they could not discover the end of it. The streets were straight, and the houses close to each other; and in the midst of the town was a large and lofty edifice, which the Cacique, their guide, told them was the dwelling of Quarica, the lord of that place, and the temple also: in that temple he assured them, there were many idols, one of which was of a goddess, the size of a full-grown woman, and others the size of children four years old, all of massive gold. Farther on, he said, there were other towns much larger than this, and other chieftains, who greatly exceeded Quarica in power. Utre at-

tempted to seize a man in the village, that he might obtain further information. The man wounded him severely with a lance; others ran into the city and spread the alarm. The Spaniards retreated; they were pursued by an army of Omeguas, over whom they gained a miraculous victory; and on their return, they related this story, the utter falsehood of which cannot now be doubted, but which obtained full credit at the time, and for nearly two centuries afterwards.

The name of the Omaguas, therefore, being connected with the popular belief, and the greediest hopes of the Spaniards, the account which the Brazilians gave of their adventures, occasioned a great stir in Peru. The Marques de Cañète, then Viceroy, was solicited to send out an expedition for the conquest of El Dorado, now, it was thought, surely to be found; and he was glad of an occasion to rid the country of turbulent spirits, who were but too numerous, and from whom new rebellions were else to be apprehended. Nor

is it unlikely that the Viceroy himself partook of the general credulity; he furnished money for the expedition from the treasury, and some on his own account, which he borrowed; and he appointed Pedro de Orsua to the command.

Pedro de Orsua was a knight of Navarre, who, in the year 1543, came out from Spain with his uncle, Miguel Diaz de Armendariz. Armendariz was *Colegial Mayor* of S. Bartolome at Salamanca, and had been sent out to exercise the highest judicial authority, as Visitor of the governments of Cartagena, Santa Marta, Popayan, the Rio de S. Juan, and the Nuevo Reyno de Granada, then newly conquered, and in a most unsettled state; a prey to the rapacity of its conquerors, who were divided among themselves, and whose fidelity to the crown of Spain was as little to be relied upon as that of their fellow-adventurers in Peru. Being detained at Cartagena by the pressure of business, he deputed Orsua, too young a man for so

weighty a charge, to act for him in the Nuevo Reyno; and Orsua's conduct, in the execution of this arduous office, had been distinguished rather by courage and promptitude, than by impartiality and prudence. His next was a military employ, being sent by Gonçalo Ximenez de Quesada, (the conqueror of Bogota and Tunja,) to quell some Indians, who had risen in considerable force against their oppressors. In this expedition, Orsua acquired great reputation as a soldier; and though the excessive rigour with which he punished the Indians for what the Spaniards called their rebellion, was disapproved by Quesada himself; a fault of that kind was not likely to lessen him in the good opinion of his countrymen and fellow-soldiers.*

Orsua next appears at the head of an expedition into the province of the Chitareros, in search of El Dorado and the

* Piedrahita, l. 10. c. 3. 6. 7. l. 11. c. 2.

House of the Sun. His uncle appointed him to this command; and it is said that no appointment could have been more popular. The force consisted of an hundred Spanish infantry, and thirty-six horse; this being deemed a sufficient army against the Indians. They found samples of gold, which afterwards led to the discovery of some of the most productive mines; and Orsua, in pursuance of his instructions, founded a city, to which, in memory of Navarre, he gave the name of Pamplona. The situation was well chosen, and the city became one of the most flourishing in the Nuevo Reyno. He was not less successful in the military part of his next adventure, at the head of an equal force against the Muzos, who had succeeded in repelling three Spanish leaders of high reputation in the Indian wars. They were defeated by Orsua, and he endeavoured to found a settlement in this country, which, with a Navarrese feeling, he called Tudela. But the

Spaniards, whom he left as settlers there, were, in a few weeks, driven out, and many of them were cut off in their retreat.*

This ill-fortune was, in some degree, imputable to Orsua himself. He had been promised, on his return, the command of another expedition for the conquest of El Dorado, and in his eagerness for that adventure, he left his work half done. Instead, therefore, of obtaining this coveted command, he was appointed to the office of Justicia Mayor of Santa Marta. From that city, he set out with forty foot soldiers and twelve horse, to subjugate the Tayronas, one of the most warlike of the native tribes. In their country, all those golden ornaments were wrought which, to their own misfortune, were worn by

* Piedrahita, l. 11. c. 5. 8. After eating a friar who fell into their hands, so many of the pursuers were afflicted with hæmorrhoids, that believing it to be the punishment for this act of cannibalism, the whole tribe are said from that time to have renounced the abominable custom.

the tribes upon the coast, from Cape de la Vela to the Gulf of Darien, and which had brought upon the Indians all the infinite miseries that the conquerors inflicted upon them. The Tayronas deceived Orsua, by sending him a rich present of gold dust: and when he was on his return, ill of a quartain ague, and believing that he had left them in friendship with the Spaniards, they attacked him by surprize, and with great numbers, in a perilous pass. By the most extraordinary personal exertions, he escaped from this danger, and gave the Indians a signal defeat. On his recovery, finding how little force for offensive operations could be raised at Santa Marta, he returned to Santa Fe, in hope of undertaking from thence, the discovery of the golden land, upon which his desires unhappily were bent.*

* Piedrahita, l. 11. c. 8. This author's account of the victory over the Tayronas is a fine specimen of bombast.

That hope was interrupted by the misfortunes of his uncle, Armendariz, who, coming himself under the cognizance of a power, like that with which he had been invested, was sent prisoner to Cartagena by a passionate and iniquitous Visitor. Orsua, with two of his kinsmen and a few friends, followed him there, to assist him in his difficulties; and remaining there, in pursuance of this duty, escaped shipwreck in an armament in which he would otherwise have embarked. When Armendariz was delivered from his troubles, Orsua, who had now neither patron nor influence in the Nuevo Reyno, set out for Peru, meaning to try his fortune in that country. Upon his arrival at Panama, he found the new Viceroy, the Marquis of Cañète, waiting in that city for a passage to Lima: his reputation was higher than that of any man of his standing in these parts of the Spanish Indies; and at the Viceroy's proposal, the *Cabildo* of

Panama appointed him to the command, in an arduous war against the Maroon* negroes. More than six hundred such persons had taken advantage of the opportunities which that country offered them. They had chosen a brave man, by name Bayano, for their king; and taking up their abode in the mountains, made the way across the isthmus so perilous, that it could only be attempted by large parties well-armed. A force of two hundred men was raised for the service; soldiers for the most part of desperate fortunes; some who had been banished there for the share which they had taken in the late rebellion in Peru; and others who had escaped thither from the severer punishment which they had deserved on the same score. They were pardoned on condition of engaging in this severe service. Orsua was employed two years in the war, and all his perseverance, and skill and intrepidity, were re-

* *Cimarrones.* Garcilaso says the word is taken from the language of the Leeward Islands.

quired to bring it to a favourable termination; for he was opposed to resolute and desperate enemies. He succeeded in reducing them to sue for peace; but it was concluded upon terms more equitable than would have been granted, if the Spaniards had not been weary of the contest. Orsua then followed the Viceroy to Lima, and he had not been long in Peru, before his highest desire was gratified by an appointment to the command of the expedition in quest of that imaginary kingdom, by the discovery and conquest of which he hoped to place himself in the same rank with Cortes and Pizarro and Quesada.*

Such had been Pedro de Orsua's previous fortunes, when this appointment was given him, not through favour, or influence, but because no other person was thought to unite in himself so many† qua-

* Piedrahita, l. 12. c. 4. Garcilaso, p. 2. l. 8. c. 3.

† Piedrahita speaks of him as the captain of the highest reputation in the Nuevo Reyno; and in

lifications for such a command. The miserable fate of Gonzalo Pizarro's army had warned Orsua against attempting to proceed by land; he fixed upon a new settlement, called Santa Cruz de Capocoba*, as the place of rendezvous for his followers; and there upon the Rio de los Motilones began to build two brigantines and nine flat-bottomed barks, each capable of carrying two hundred men and forty

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another place he calls him, *uno de los hombres mas valerosos con que puede honrarse la Celtiberia, y que a aver cambiado los empleos militares de Indias por los de Europa, le huvieran igualado muy pocos.*

* Ulloa says, "A village called Llamas was, according to the most credible accounts, the place where Orsua embarked. He places it on a river which rises in the mountains of Moyo-bamba, and in the middle of its course to the Guallaga." (Book 6. C. 5. Engl. transl. p. 366.) This river is probably the Rio de Moyo-bamba: the village is not marked in the great Spanish map. Condamine says, "*La memoire de son expedition, et celle des evenements qui furent cause de sa funeste aventure, se conservent encore parmi les habitants de Lamas, petit bourg voisin du port où il s'embarqua.*" Relation Abregée, p. 60.

horse. This river, which rises at the back of Tama-bamba, in the province of Huanuco, was so called from a tribe, who, contrary to the ordinary fashion of the Indians, wore the hair cut short. The tribe still exists, but the river is no longer known by this name; it is one of the sources of the Guallaga.* The force which was raised, consisted of three hundred Spaniards, about forty† of whom were men

* Herrera, Hist. Gen. l. 9. c. 12.

† "Toute la Noblesse vint s'offrir à Orsua, et comme il étoit dans l'estime de tout le monde, il n'y eut si vieux soldat qui n'abandonnât sa retraite avec plaisir pour servir sous un si digne général. Orsua ne fut en peine qu'à remercier tant de personnes qu'il ne pouvoit mener avec luy. Il choisit tout ce qu'il y avoit de meilleur parmy tant de gens de service." *Relation de la Rivière des Amazones*, t. 1. p. 49.

This is part of the historical matter, which Gomberville interpolated, in his translation of Acuña. He states Orsua's force at more than seven hundred chosen men, *avec quantité de fort bons chevaux*. And the whole account which he has given is so exceedingly inaccurate, that he seems to have written it from memory, and trusted to invention when that failed him.

of rank, and an hundred mestizos. So many of these adventurers had borne a part in the late rebellions, that the government began to fear the consequences of its own policy, seeing them thus collected; and there were not wanting malicious men, who endeavoured to render Orsua himself* suspected. Orsua's own friends were with more reason alarmed for his safety; and one of them wrote to him, beseeching him that he would not wilfully shut his eyes to the danger, but that he would dismiss a few of those adventurers, from whom there was most reason to apprehend mischief, naming, in particular, a certain Don Martin, Lorenzo de Zalduendo, Lope de Aguirre, Juan Alonso de la Vandera, Christoval

* During the rebellion of Francisco Hernandez Giron, there had been a rumour in Peru, that Orsua was coming from the Nuevo Reyno, with a great force to join him. There seems to have been no ground for this, though it gave the Peruvian government considerable uneasiness at the time. Garcilaso, p. 2. l. 7. c. 13.

de Chaves, and a few others. "If," said this true friend, whose name was Pedro de Linasco, "you are unwilling to dismiss them because of their poverty, do not let that feeling of compassion prevent you, but send them to me; and I will support them to the best of my means, till you have advanced into your conquest, and may recall them when you can safely give them employment, and confer upon them whatever benefits you may be disposed to give." Linasco also besought him not to take with him his mistress D. Iñes de Atienza, a beautiful widow. The thing itself, he said, was wrong; it was an ill example for his people, and might draw after it worse consequences than he could apprehend; and he offered to provide a proper situation for her, and to manage the business, so that she should not suppose it was by Orsua's will that she was left behind.* His advice was given in vain; Orsua

* P. Simon, 6. 4. § 1.

indeed sent back Don Martin, but he retained the others in his company, persevered in his intention of taking Iñes with him, and returned no answer to Linasco's letter.

In other respects Orsua proceeded with great prudence. While the brigantines and other vessels were on the stocks, he sent forward his friend and confidant Garcia de Arze with thirty men, ordering him to proceed about twenty leagues down to the province of the Caperuzos, or hooded Indians, there to collect what provisions he could, and wait for Juan de Vargas; then proceed with him to the river Cocama, and there remain, laying in whatever stores that part of the country could supply, till the rest of the expedition joined them. Instead of adhering to these instructions, Arze went above two hundred leagues down, past the mouth of the Cocama, and of many other streams, and then landed on an island of the river, which was called Garcias after his name. His men arrived there hungry and half-

starved; they had been glad to eat caymans upon the way, which he killed with his harquebuss, being famous for his skill as a marksman. Here they fortified themselves with a palisade; and the natives, after suffering severely in repeated attacks, sent a party with a present of provisions, as a peace-offering. These adventurers always suspected treachery, because they were always ready to perpetrate it themselves; they got the unsuspicious Indians into a hut, fell upon them, and massacred above forty. This cruelty terrified the whole country; all who thought themselves within reach of the Spaniards abandoned their dwelling-places, and Arze was thus enabled to procure subsistence for his people for three months, till Orsua joined him here.*

Vargas and his detachment meantime set out in one of the brigantines as soon as it was completed, and in canoes. Disappointed

* P. Simon, 6. 4. § 2. 3.

of meeting Arze, they advanced to the Cocama, and there, pursuant to his instructions, their leader, leaving the less able hands in the brigantine, turned up that river to seek for provisions. He rowed up two-and-twenty days, without finding any thing more than sufficed for immediate use; then some better settlements were found, where there was abundance of maize. Vargas took all that could be embarked in all the canoes he could find, carried off as many of the inhabitants as he could, both male and female, for the use, as it was called, of the expedition, and then returned to the brigantine, where, in the mean time, three Spaniards and many Indians had died of hunger and the unwholesome climate. They remained two long months expecting Orsua: the patience of the men was worn out; some proposed to kill Vargas, and make their way up the Cocama to Peru, others thought it better to leave him there, and go on to make discoveries,

for they were more than an hundred, and thought themselves strong enough. But no bolder spirit took the lead among them, and their plans of mutiny and murder proceeded no farther.*

Orsua meantime had so won the settlers at Santa Cruz by his generous qualities, that they one and all consented to abandon the settlement, and share his fortunes. But when his vessels were launched and loaded, six of his new flat-bottomed barks proved useless; the wood had not been seasoned, indeed in that wet country it had not been possible to season it; it was brittle also, and when the barks were hauled ashore to be repaired, they cracked in such a manner as to render any repair hopeless. To remain was ruinous, when every day's delay would consume provisions which could not be replaced. They were compelled, therefore, to leave behind great part of their baggage and most of

* P. Simon, 6. 5. § 1. 2.

their live stock, and of three hundred horses could only embark forty; the rest were abandoned there to run wild. The men clamoured loudly at thus losing the little property they possessed, and insisted upon rather returning to Peru. Orsua, however, threatening some and soothing others, flattered them all with hopes of the glorious conquests they were about to make; and added, that the loss was his, not theirs; inasmuch as he, being their leader, was bound to satisfy them amply for all, when it should please God to conduct them to that happy land of which they were in quest.* These representations succeeded so well, that not a single man deserted him.

They departed from the now forsaken settlement on the 26th of September, 1560, and on the second day left the mountains behind them, and entered the flat country. On the third the brigantine touched upon

* P. Simon, 6. 5. § 3. Herrera, Hist. Gen. l. 9. c. 12.

a shoal, and a piece of its keel was broken off. The crew were left to repair the damage how they could, and Orsua proceeded to the province of the Caperuzos, where he had sent Zalduendo a few days before him to collect provisions. Two days afterwards the brigantine arrived; it was then thoroughly repaired, and sent forward to join Vargas at the Cocama, for Orsua apprehended, that the men there would be discontented at his long tarriance. He with the smaller vessels proceeded more leisurely, landing every night and sleeping on shore, because of the danger there was from shallows and sunken trees in the darkness. An hundred and fifty leagues below the place of his embarkation, the Guallaga* falls into the

* Five leagues above its junction, Condamine embarked at Laguna, the principal of the Maynas missions. He estimated the width of the Guallaga at about 250 *toises*. There is a place on this river called the *Salto de Aguirre*. The Indians of Llamas say, that a great bird had its resting-place formerly among the heights there, from whence it used to

river of the Bracamoros, as it was then called, the Nuevo Marañon of the present maps. These streams rise in the same province, and at little distance from each other; but the latter takes a wide sweep in its course, and is as broad again as the Huallaga, where it receives it. Here Orsua halted, and sent a party up the stream in search of food; but the country was uninhabited as far as they thought it prudent to ascend. A hundred leagues farther on, they reached Vargas, whose people, since the arrival of the brigantine, had been joyfully expecting this junction. The Cocama of that day appears to be

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pounce upon the passers-by, carry them up in its talons, and dash them against the rocks, till a certain man, by name Aguirre, killed this monster. The traditionary explanation is, that some Aguirre instigated the natives to kill a tyrannical governor; and it is supposed in the *Mercurio Peruano*, that the murder of Orsua is the real origin of this tradition:—a supposition which could only have been advanced by writers altogether ignorant of the real history. T. 2. 236.

the Piguena.* From thence they proceeded in great alarm for the safety of Arze, of whom neither party as yet knew any thing. †

By this time Vargas's brigantine was rotten, so utterly unserviceable was the timber of that country; and they had scarcely renewed their voyage before it was found necessary to abandon her, and distribute the crew and cargo among the other boats. They past the mouth of the Ucayali, and eight days after their departure from the Cocama, reached the island where Arze and his companions had quartered themselves, to the equal joy of both parties. These were the first habitations which they had seen since they left the Caperuzo Indians. The natives here were a strong and well-made race. They wore a single garment of cotton; its texture was good, and it was painted with many colours. Their principal food

* Or Tigre; it is called by both names.

† P. Simon, *5. 5.* § 4.; 6. 6. § 1.

was fish, maize, and mandioc, of which they made their banqueting drink; they had potatoes also, and other roots and pulse. Their dwellings were large and square; their weapon, the wooden spear and throwing stick. *Papa* was the title of their chief. Here Orsua got more canoes for his people to supply the loss of the brigantine. Here too, finding it impossible to attend to the whole command of such an armament himself, he named Vargas to be his lieutenant-general, and D. Fernando de Guzman to be *alferez-general*, or chief standard-bearer; and they once more set forth, the whole armament being now reassembled.*

A little below Garcia's Island, the Napo falls in, by which Orellana entered the great stream. The neighbouring settlements were all deserted, in consequence of Arze's cruelty; food however was found in the fields which they cultivated,

* P. Simon, 5. 6. § 1—4.

and poultry, which they had left in their flight; and among these were European fowls. After some days, they came to a settlement called Carari, on the southern bank. Here also the natives fled, but some of them only kept aloof in their canoes watching the strangers, and a Cazique came to them, after three or four days, with a present of provisions; beads, knives, and looking-glasses, were given him in return, and trade was presently established. Orsua, well knowing of what importance it was that the natives should be their friends, and how probable it was that his own men would soon make them enemies by their misconduct, gave orders that no man, upon pain of death, should carry on any traffic with the Indians except in his presence, and through his hands; for by this means he would see that all parties were satisfied, and that provisions should be properly distributed to those who were most necessitous. Notwithstanding these orders, some of his

people took by violence what they could find; and during the whole of their voyage through this province, the inhabitants never remained confidently in their habitations, but removed their wives and children, and then came off to deal with the adventurers in canoes.*

Here Orsua thought it best to halt and send a party into the country for a few days, in hope of hearing some tidings in that direction of the golden kingdom which he sought. Pedro Galeas had the command of the detachment. They went along the shores of a lake which communicated with the river, and found a path leading through the woods, where, just when the time allotted for advancing was at an end, they espied some Indians laden with provisions. These people instantly upon seeing them, threw down their burthens and fled; and the Spaniards could only catch one woman, whose appearance and language denoted that she was not

* P. Simon, 5. 6. § 4.; 5. 7. § 1. 2.

of any tribe which they had seen before. They understood from her signs, that her country was five days' journey distant, and they took her with them to Orsua. That commander had, by this time, begun to perceive what a set of desperate wretches he had collected together. The first indication of discontent came from a man named Alonso de Montoya; it was discovered that he had laid a plot to steal some of the canoes, and stores for his purpose, and make his way with his accomplices back to Peru. Orsua inflicted no heavier chastisement upon him than to secure him for a time with an iron collar. His mode of punishing other offences was to make the offenders pull at the oar for certain days, .. a labour which was probably always at other times performed by the unfortunate Indians. This ill effect followed, that the other soldiers, some perhaps in mere mockery, and others with a worse intent, 'taunted them at their toil, asking what they were better

than galley-slaves. Galeas had brought no intelligence to induce them to strike inland; nor could any thing be learnt from the Indians whom they had yet seen concerning the golden land of the Omaguas. Nothing, therefore, was to be done but to proceed down the river on their search, after a longer tarriance than had been intended, because here their last wretched brigantine went to the bottom, and they were obliged to collect more canoes. The peopled country continued from the time they reached it at Garcia's Island, about a hundred and fifty leagues according to their computation, which track they supposed to consist of the provinces called Caricuri and Manicuri. Having come from Peru, they did not recollect that this country was too savage to have any division of provinces; these were the names of settlements or of chiefs, and all the inhabitants were of the same tribe. Their villages were some four or six leagues apart, and the whole population was not

thought to exceed twelve thousand. Some little gold they wore in ear and nose jewels; fortunately for them it was but little, and their country afforded no temptation to detain the adventurers. The plague of insects was very great: gnats of every kind, in innumerable swarms, tormented the Spaniards.*

Improvidently Orsua left this peopled country, without inquiring where it ended, or how long the desert continued through which he was to pass. During nine days, therefore, they suffered severely for want of provisions, having only what fish they could catch, tortoises and their eggs, and spinage and purslane, † which, fortunately

* P. Simon, 6. 7. § 3. 4.

† Stedman also found wild purslane in great quantities in the woods of Guiana. "It differs from the common only in growing nearer the ground, the leaves being less, and more of a blackish green. It may be eaten as a sallad, or stewed, without reserve, being not only a cooling and agreeable food, but reckoned an excellent antidote against the scurvy." — Vol. 2. p. 123.

for them, the country produced. On the tenth they reached a village. Immediately on their appearance, the women, children, and property, such as it was, were hurried into canoes, and sent down the stream, while the men stood to their arms, ready to defend their houses manfully. Orsua landed at the head of a party small enough to show that no attack was intended on his part, yet strong enough for security. He advanced somewhat before them, with his harquebuss in one hand and a white cloth in the other, which he held out as a token of peace. The sign was understood, a chief came forward, and took the cloth; the Spaniards were led to the square or open place of the settlement, and Orsua, by intelligible signs, requested that lodgings should be allotted to him and his people during their stay, in one part of the village, while the inhabitants, with their families, abode safely in the other. To this they willingly acceded; the strangers were lodged in the best huts,

and Orsua gave orders that no man on pain of death should enter the dwellings of the Indians, nor offer them any injury. This place was called Machifaro.* The people differed both in language and fashions from the last tribe.† They kept tortoises in stews near their houses, securing them by little palisades; and provisions of every kind were abundant.

From hence Galeas was sent a second time to explore the country; he went by water, entered a great lake, upon which he soon lost sight of land, then making for the shore lest he should lose himself, kept coasting along for some days, without seeing any habitation or marks of man, till it was time to return from his fruitless adventure. During his absence, there had been a war at Machifaro. A desert track, of nine days' journey in length, even with the help of a rapid stream, was not suffi-

* The province of Machiparo is mentioned in Orellana's Voyage.

† P. Simon, 6. 8. § 12.

cient interval of distance to keep two savage tribes in peace. The Carari Indians had long been at deadly enmity with these remote neighbours, and now, supposing that the passage of the Spaniards would have so alarmed them as to engage their whole attention, they thought it a happy opportunity to wreak their vengeance. Accordingly one night they arrived before Machifaro. Here they perceived marks of the strangers, and therefore delayed their attack till day-break, lest they might rashly provoke enemies whom they had no intention to offend, and whom they knew themselves unequal to cope with. In the morning, seeing that their apprehension was well founded, they retired; but as they began their way up the river, they blew their horns, and set up their war-cry in bravado, that their enemies might know they had been to look at them. This roused the sleeping tribe, and the chief hastened to Orsua, and besought him to assist in pursuing the invaders. Orsua's new friends had

not more claim on him for assistance than his old ones; but destruction was sport to these adventurers, and Vargas, with fifty harquebussiers, was sent to accompany the Machifarans. They knew the country, and, taking a shorter channel than was known to their enemies, got into the great stream above them, and thus cut off their retreat. The Cararies prepared confidently for battle till they perceived the Spaniards; then they made signs of peace, reminding their former guests, that there was no enmity between them, and that they did not expect hostility at their hands. A discharge of musquetry was the reply which they received, and they had no alternative but to leave their canoes, and strike into the woods, where the Spaniards supposed they would all perish for hunger before they could reach their own country!*

Great care had been taken to furnish this expedition with guides. There went

* P. Simon, 6. 8. 4.

in it some of the Brazilians upon whose information it had been undertaken; one of the Portugueze who had been with them in their long travels, and even one or two of Orellana's companions; all, however, were at a loss; the latter, because it was now so long since their first voyage, and of so long a voyage under such circumstances it was scarcely possible that any distinct local recollections could be preserved; the former, because they could not verify the false accounts which they had given; all they could say was, that they supposed the country of the Omaguas to be near. This, as they had now advanced, according to their computation, more than seven hundred leagues, Orsua thought probable; and believing himself near his own government, he deemed it advisable, now while there was leisure for such regulations, to settle the few arrangements which still remained incomplete. Of these the most important were what related to spiritual affairs: the clergy of the expedition did not agree with

each other; the best way to remedy this discord, he thought, would be to put an end to that equality among them which was the cause of it; and holding himself to be the representative of the king, and therefore authorized to confer ecclesiastical dignities, he appointed Alonso Henao to be *Superior Provisor*, *Cura* and *Vicario* of the expedition. The first act of the new Superior was, to pronounce excommunication against all persons who might have appropriated to themselves any of the articles of traffic belonging to the governor, and by him provided for the public use. This measure occasioned great murmurs; it was said publicly that Orsua had given the priest his powers for no other purpose, and that he had no authority to confer any ecclesiastical office. Murmurs reached his ears, as it was designed they should do; he, however, gave no heed to them, and the *Provisor* continued to exercise his functions. Another cause of discontent arose from the conduct of the soldiers toward the

natives; for the Indians, alarmed at the consumption made by these long-abiding guests, secreted their food; and the adventurers, fearing another track of desert country, were not contented with feeding well while they stayed, but each laid violent hands on all the provisions he could find, to lay up store for himself. Some of these offenders, Orsua put in confinement; among them was a mestizo servant of Guzman, his *Alferez*.*

The length of way which they had voyaged without hearing any tidings of El Dorado, had, by this time, deadened the hopes of the most ardent, and murmurs went abroad that it was better to return, and make their way back to Peru, lest they should all perish. These murmurs were instigated by a party, whose object in first joining the expedition was to turn back, under Orsua or any other leader, and attempt the conquest of Peru, like

* P. Simon, 6. 9. § 1. 2.; 6. 8. § 2.

Gonzalo Pizarro, and Francisco Hernandez Giron, that the old days of anarchy and the sword might be renewed. Zalduendo, Aguirre, Vandera, and Chaves, the men of whom Orsua had been especially warned by his friend Linasco, were among the foremost of this party. Concealing their own views, they laboured to indispose others to the service; and Orsúa, perceiving the growing disaffection, thought it advisable to call together those who seemed most averse to proceeding, and set before them the disgrace and ignominy of thus lightly abandoning the enterprize in which they had embarked. "What province of the Indies," said he, "has ever been conquered without labour, and difficulty, and long patience? Even if the youngest of us were to grow grey upon this adventure before it be completed, the immense riches which we shall obtain would be an ample recompence for all."*

* P. Simon, 6. 8. § 3. 4.

His fearless confidence persuaded those who had no other purposes in view, and the agitators, therefore, now resolved upon his murder.

Zalduendo and Vandera had both set their eyes upon Orsua's* mistress, a mischief which Linasco had foreseen, and against which he had prophetically warned his ill-fated friend. One of the complaints urged with most effect against him was, that he doted upon this woman as though she had bewitched him; that she, not Orsua, commanded the army; that the men were condemned to the oar for the slightest offences like galley-slaves, only that they might row her canoe; that Orsua was dallying with her when he ought to be providing for the weal of the expedition; and that, instead of lodging in the midst of the army as behoved him, he always took up

* Gomberville calls Inēs the wife of Orsua, says that she had accompanied him in all his travels, and represents Guzman and Aguirre as her lovers! Tom. i. p. 53.

his quarters apart, that he might not be disturbed in his dalliance. A strong party of conspirators was formed; they were all of low birth and station, and a leader was wanting respectable enough in both to give some show of authority to their proceedings; but the men of rank were personally attached to the general. The arrest of Guzman's mestizo servant afforded a pretext for sounding his master. D. Fernando de Guzman was a native of Seville, and of good family; he was in his twenty-sixth year; his person was fine, his manners good, his nature not evil; but his want of principle and intellect made him first the tool, and then the victim of worse men than himself. The conspirators began with him by affecting zeal for the king's service, and the good of the expedition, which, they said, was likely to be destroyed by Orsua's misconduct; they dwelt upon the general's severity, and especially the arrest of Guzman's mestizo, without any consideration of the rank and authority of his master;

and they won over the weak young man to their wishes. A secret council was then held; Guzman and his friends proposed to leave Orsua here, continue their way down the river, and then return to Peru by the usual route; Zalduendo and Aguirre were for putting Orsua and Vargas, his lieutenant, to death; and returning, not merely for the sake of returning, but to seize the country, and make Guzman its lord. He had neither virtue nor understanding to take alarm at this desperate proposal; drunk with ambition, he consented to the measures which these wretches advised; the sentence of death was past, and they determined that, on the first opportunity, it should be executed.*

These things could not be carried on so secretly as not to excite some suspicion in the general's friends, though none could suspect the extent of the treason which was meditated. They warned him that there

* P. Simon, 6.9.§3.4.; 6.10.§1.; 6.22.§4.

was mischief afoot, and besought him always to have a guard of those in whom he could confide about his person; but to have his friends always about him would prevent him from being alone with Donna Iñes, and therefore he gave no heed to such advice. It was needless, he said; there were so many men of Biscay and Navarre in the army, that he had only to speak a word in Basque, and he was safe.* A more awful warning was intended for him, had it but reached his ear. Juan Gomez de Guevara, a *Comendador* of the order of Alcantara, who was an elderly man of high character, and one of his best friends, was at a late hour enjoying the freshness of the night air before his lodging, which was next to the general's, when a figure past him in the shade, and presently he heard a voice exclaim, "Pedro de Orsua, Governor of Omagua and El Dorado, God have mercy upon thee!" Guevara followed the figure, but it was gone;

* Herrera, Hist. Gen. l. 9. c. 12.

he supposed it to be supernatural, and when he communicated the warning to some of Orsua's friends, they, having the same belief, agreed not to mention it to him, because he was at that time indisposed. It was on the night after the murder had been resolved that the voice was heard; most probably one of the conspirators, startled at being hurried beyond the limits of guilt which he had proposed to himself, thought thus to alarm the general, and save him by putting him on his guard.*

While they remained at Machifaro, the conspirators could find no opportunity for effecting their purpose. The day after Christmas, they departed, and the same night reached another village of the same name, about eight leagues distant: the inhabitants had forsaken it, they therefore took possession and quartered themselves there; and Orsua again sent a detachment to explore the country, under Sancho Pi-

* P. Simon, 6. 10. § 2.

zarro. He had chosen a body of trusty men for this service, and gave the command to one of his friends; these, therefore, were so many opponents out of the conspirators' way, and they resolved not to let the occasion pass. The night of New-year's-day was fixed upon for the murder, because that being a festival, it was thought there would be less guard than usual, little as there was at any time. His good angel made one effort more to save him. A negro of Vandera's discovered what had been determined; and, at the risk of his own life, found means to go to Orsua's lodging, to tell him of his danger. Orsua had brought his bane with him in that unhappy woman; he was alone with her when the negro arrived; even on such an errand the man could not obtain admittance; he dared not tarry, and therefore imparted his intelligence to a black slave of the general's; and the slave, being perhaps in the conspiracy, or, it may be, hating his master, never delivered the important charge with which he

had been entrusted. When it was night, the chief conspirators assembled, and sent a mestizo, in Guzman's name, to beg a little oil at Orsua's; a pretext this for discovering whether he was alone. At a late hour they sallied out; Montoya and Chaves, eager to be the murderers, got before the rest, and found Orsua in his hammock, talking with a page. He asked them what they wanted at such an hour, and they ran him through. Wounded as he was, he rose to take his shield and sword, but by this time the others entered, and he had scarcely cried out vainly, Confession! confession! and exclaimed, *Miserere mei Deus!* God have mercy upon me! before he was killed.* The murderers immediately sallied

* In the Travels of D. Jorge Juan, and Ulloa, it is said, "The first news of Orsua was, that he and the greatest part of his men were killed in an ambuscade by the Indians, a catastrophe entirely owing to his own ill conduct." It is singular that these authors could have been so ignorant of so remarkable a history. Their work is ranked far above its deserts: for they are neither judicious nor well-informed writers, except in points of science.

out, crying Liberty! liberty! Long live the King! the tyrant is slain! Awakened by the cry, Vargas put on his arms, and went out towards Orsua's lodging, with his sword and shield, and the ineffectual wand of authority in his hand. The conspirators, who were now in search of him, met their victim, and surrounded him; his weapons were taken from him, and they disarmed him; the armour was hardly off when Martin Perez stabbed him with such violence in the ribs, that the sword, passing clean through, wounded the man severely who was disarming him on the other side.*

* P. Simon, 6. 10. § 3. 4.

CHAPTER II.

D. FERNANDO DE GUZMAN, ELECTED KING BY THE MUTINEERS. — TRANSACTIONS TILL HIS MURDER.

HAVING thus effected their purpose, the murderers returned to the governor's quarters, where by this time the rest of their party had assembled. Here also all the others who heard the uproar hastened, with intent to stand by Orsua; but, as they arrived singly and without order, they were forced into the ranks of the mutineers, no man daring to resist, because each felt himself alone, and knew not upon whom he could rely. When the greater part of the army were thus collected, some of the ringleaders sallied out with a sufficient body in search of the rest, who still remained at their quarters; and drawing out some by threats, some by promises, and finding others ready enough to join, brought them all to the governor's house to behold his dead body, and implicate

themselves in the guilt by assisting in burying it, which was done with no other ceremony than that of digging a hole in the hut where he had been murdered, and laying his corpse and his lieutenant's one upon the other. The chiefs of the mutiny then nominated Guzman to be their general, and Aguirre his master of the camp; they filled up no other offices, because, they said, the next business was to kill Orsua's friends and favourites. This Guzman forbade; he thought it well to begin with affecting clemency, and his nature was not bad enough to delight in inflicting death. Order, however, was given, that no man should speak in a low voice on pain of death, lest a plot should be laid for taking vengeance; and the men were not allowed to separate that night. The little store of wine was brought out which Orsua had taken with him for his own use and for the sacrament, and it was distributed among them, that they might make merry after their work of murder. Thus passed this miserable night.

In the morning they proceeded to make their new arrangements. Vandera was made captain of the guard; Villena, chief standard bearer; Zalduendo, a captain of infantry; offices were created for the most respectable of Orsua's friends, which they dared not refuse: but Diego de Valcaçar, when he was appointed *Justicia Mayor* of the camp, as he accepted the wand of office, protested that he received it in the name of his lord K. Philip, and of no other. One danger yet remained to be avoided; Sancho Pizarro was not* returned from his expedition; watch was set that none

* The Mayorunas, who inhabit about the sources of the Tapichi, and are called *Barbudos* by the Spaniards, because of their strong beards, are supposed to be descended from the soldiers who fled into the country after Orsua's murder. So the authors of the *Mercurio Peruano* say (No. 76.); but it does not appear that any desertion took place in consequence of his death. And similar stories of European extraction, are told of other bearded tribes, probably without any other foundation in any case than a mere supposition, advanced for the sake of solving what in reality was no problem.

might carry tidings to him, lest he and his party should come with an intention of revenging Orsua, and be joined by those whose assent to the measures of the mutineers had been caused by compulsion. Their precaution succeeded; Pizarro was surprised and surrounded on his return; he was told that the office of *Sargento Mayor* had been reserved for him, and saw no alternative but to accept it with feigned satisfaction. He had discovered nothing but two deserted villages in the woods, beyond which there was no track of man.

Guzman next assembled the chief persons of the army to deliberate upon their future proceedings. He delivered it as his own opinion, that they should prosecute the discovery and conquest of El Dorado; and then, if they succeeded, the King would easily pardon what they had done; and he advised that a paper should be drawn up in their justification, containing

* P. Simon, 6. 11.

a statement and evidence that Orsua was ruining the expedition by his sloth and negligence, and that the only way to prevent the army from turning back in disgust, had been to inflict upon him and his lieutenant their merited punishment; and this, he said, should be signed by every man in the camp. Vandera and Montoya approved of this measure; Aguirre remained silent, and they who were of his faction imitated him; the process, therefore, was framed, and the army assembled to affix their signatures. Guzman began as General; the pen was then given to the Master of the camp as second in rank, and he signed himself Lope de Aguirre, Traitor. As soon as this was seen, a general murmur arose, for the boldest were astonished; there were some who remonstrated with him, but he turned to the assembly, and said, "Cavaliers, what folly is this? as if what we have done were mere pastime, and not the action of resolute and sober men! Have we not put to death the King's go-

vernor, one who represented his person, and had with him full powers and authority? and are we now to pretend to acquit ourselves of all fault by means of papers and processes which we ourselves have drawn up, as if the King and his judges would not understand how such processes are made? We have all been concerned in killing the governor, and have all rejoiced in his death; if it be otherwise, let any one lay his hand upon his heart and say so; we, therefore, have all been traitors. Suppose, then, we were to find this land of which we are in search, and were to conquer it and settle it, and it were to be ten times richer than Peru, and to be better settled than New Spain, and the King were to derive greater profit from it than from all the rest of the Indies, ... the first bachelor and lawyerling * who should arrive with a commission from his majesty to make inquiry into our conduct, would cut

* *Letradillo.*

off all our heads: this would be the reward we should reap for our services! My advice, therefore, is, that as our lives are forfeited, we should sell them dearly, and be beforehand with those who would destroy us, by going to a good land, which we all well know, and where we have friends enough, who, when they see with what intent we have returned, will receive us with open arms, and join with us, and stand by us to die in our defence. This is the course which it behoves us to take, and for this reason have I signed myself Traitor."

As soon as Aguirre had ended his speech, Villena rose to applaud it; and he added, that whosoever gave other advice to the general, could give it with no other intent than that of ruining him. It was not possible that Vandera could hear this in silence. He immediately replied, that it was no treason to kill Orsua, because it had been for the public good, and for the service of the King; and so it would be acknowledged after they should have happily

accomplished the expedition, which, under his misconduct, would have been frustrated. "The King," said he, "will not only pass over this necessary action, but will even reward us with his royal bounty: such is my opinion, and if any one says I am a traitor for holding it, that man is a liar, and I will fight him to the utterance upon this quarrel." At this Aguirre and his partizans were greatly moved, and some tumult would have ensued, if Guzman and others had not interfered. Vandera, however, when the uproar had subsided, added, "Determine on what course you will, but let no man suppose that what I have said has been from any fear of death; I shall do as the rest do, that you may know I have as good a neck for the gallows as the best of ye."* Here the conference ended, and the meeting was broken up without coming to any resolution.

Five days after the murder, they set

* P. Simon, 6. 12.

forth on their way, as if to accomplish the object of the expedition in obedience to Guzman's will. Aguirre made no opposition, for the course which he designed to take was down the river; but he contrived to sink one of their flat-bottomed boats before they set out, and another when they anchored at night, before a deserted village. This made it absolutely necessary to build new vessels, and here they halted for that purpose. Every thing had been removed from the village, so that not even pots were to be found for dressing their food. On the opposite side of the river, which was here a league across, mandioc grew wild; this they were obliged to dig themselves and prepare, for by this time most of the Indians, of both sexes, whom they had brought from Peru, or seized upon the way, were dead, killed by hard labour and want of sufficient food. They were not skilful enough to catch any quantity of fish, or perhaps fish were not to be caught in that

part of the river: wild fruits, such, says Pedro Simon, as are rather monkeys' food than man's, were their chief subsistence, after they had devoured their dogs, horses, and the poultry which had been brought out to stock the new provinces. Aguirre and his party encouraged the people to consume them, that any plan of conquest and settling might thus be rendered impracticable. Here this monster, who had hitherto only kept pace with many others in guilt, began to display his appetite for blood. Arze was his first victim: merely because he had been a friend of Orsua's, Aguirre ordered him to be strangled, telling Guzman that it was for the good of the army. Valcaçar was the next on whom he laid hands: the loyal protestation which he had made when he accepted the wand of justice was well remembered, though it had not been openly noticed at the time. He was seized in his bed, but, as they were leading him to execution, he broke from them, and,

in the hope of at least exciting tumult enough to favour his escape, cried out, "Long live the King! Long live the King!" There was none to join him; the few who were loyal in their hearts were completely subjected by terror, and, as his only chance, he ran into the river. Search was made for him in the morning, and, as Guzman caused it to be proclaimed that he should not be injured, he came from his hiding-place, thus for the time escaping.*

The work of retribution was now beginning. Two of the wretches who had been among the foremost instigators of Orsua's murder, were put to death by Aguirre on a mere report that they were conspiring against Guzman. Disputes arose between him and Vandera concerning their respective offices, which was the highest; the general, who favoured Vandera, thought to determine it by making him Camp-master, and appointing his rival to the

* P. Simon, 6. 13. § 1—3.

inferior rank of captain of cavalry, making Zalduendo at the same time captain of the guard. There were not wanting men who told him that Aguirre was not to be offended with impunity, however he might dissemble his resentment; and they offered to prevent all farther mischief by killing him; but Guzman thought to conciliate him, and therefore contracted that his brother, D. Martin de Guzman, who was left in Peru, should marry a mestiza daughter whom Aguirre had brought with him. A large robe of rich silk, which had been Orsua's, was given her as the spousal present; and from this time the general treated her as his sister-in-law, and honoured her father with the title of Don. This man, so unhappily notorious in American history, had supported himself in Peru, by the trade of breaking-in horses. In the rebellion of Don Sebastian de Castilla, he had borne so active a part that he was sentenced to death, and would assuredly have been executed, could he have

been taken; but when a pardon was offered to all offenders who would join the king's standard against Giron, he took advantage of the proclamation, and came from his hiding place. For some subsequent villainy, he was again condemned, together with Zalduendo, and would have been hanged at Cuzco; but he broke prison, and remained in the woods till he found an opportunity of joining Orsua. His hope was, that Orsua would rebel; being disappointed in this, he laid a plan for murdering him, and electing as leader that D. Martin, who, in consequence of Linasco's advice, and perhaps of some suspicion of such views, had been banished from the army. Such had been the general irregularity of his conduct, that in Peru he was commonly called Aguirre *el loco*, the madman; and assuredly his after atrocities were such, that it is only to madness they can be imputed.*

* P. Simon. 6. 13. § 3. 4; 6. 14. § 1. 2.; 6. 52. § 2.

The projected marriage brought about no reconciliation between Aguirre and Vandera, and each was determined to rid himself of the other. Vandera repeatedly went out in search of his enemy, meaning to fall upon him and kill him; but Aguirre was never without his adherents at hand, neither by day nor night, and he even slept in his armour. His own measures were better laid. There was a rivalry between Vandera and Zalduendo for Donna Iñes; the latter, therefore, leagued with Aguirre, and they raised a report that Vandera designed to murder Guzman, and make himself general. Weak as he was, Guzman did not believe a report which was known to originate with Aguirre, till Zalduendo asserted with an oath, that he had proof of the intention from Vandera's own lips; and that the office of Camp-master, when this second mutiny should have succeeded, was to be given to Christoval Hernandez, a man who had infamously distinguished himself in the

rebellions of Gonzalo Pizarro, and Giron. Guilt had made Guzman suspicious, and suspicion made him cruel: he invited these two men to a game at cards, instructed Aguirre when to come in with a band of assassins, and thus murdered them as treacherously as they had murdered Orsua. The main mover of the mischief was then restored to his office of Campmaster.*

The next measure which was taken by this man's advice, was to convoke the army, when Guzman harangued them. "It might be," he said, "that, as a few individual cavaliers had named him to be their general, their choice had not the general approbation to confirm it; but it was fitting that, when there were so many good soldiers, the command should be given to one who was chosen with the common consent; he therefore resigned his authority, laid down the partisan

* P. Simon, 6. 14. § 3. 4.

which he carried, as if it were the wand of office, and requested the army would proceed to a fresh election, promising faithfully to obey whatever person they might chuse. All the officers whom he had appointed, in like manner, laid down the badges of their respective appointments. The termination of this farce was what had been expected; some were in the secret, some were duped by it; they who were neither dupes nor accomplices perceived the snare which was laid for them, and all with one accord called upon Guzman to resume the command. He then declared, that his intention was to make himself master of Peru, and that he required an oath from all his followers, that they would carry on war against the King of Castille in that country, with fire and sword, and that they would be true and loyal to him their general in all things; " but, said he, " it is not my wish to force the inclination of any man; if there be any among ye who are not willing to join in

this rebellion against the King, from any scruples of conscience, let them forthwith avow their minds; if they are enough in number to defend themselves, we will leave them in some part of the country, with their full and fair proportion of arms and stores; should they be too few for this, we will take them on with us as our brethren, and leave them at the first friendly settlement we come to, to dispose of themselves in whatever manner they may think best. Let no man be afraid to declare himself openly, for, on my word and faith, he shall receive no injury for so doing." Even in this army, composed as it was of the refuse ruffians of Peru, three men were found not so credulous as to believe the promises of Guzman, but honest enough to incur the certain consequences of avowing their loyalty, for they would rather die, they said, than become traitors.* Their names were, Francisco

* P. Simon, 6. 13. § 3. 4.; 16 § 1. 2.

Vazquez, Juan de Cabannas, and Juan de Vargas Zapata. It was immediately remarked, that, as they did not mean to follow the war, they could have no occasion for arms, and their weapons were taken from them.

On the following day, the oath was administered. The *Provisor* had not courage enough to refuse officiating, and he therefore held in his hands the travelling altar, and the missal upon it, on which he administered the oath of treason. The men were then called upon to sign their names; this form was less scrupulously exacted; some could not write; and some thinking, if things ended unsuccessfully, it might avail them to plead that their hands were not set to this paper, kept back, while others crowded forward to add their signatures to the covenant. Aguirre was not yet satisfied; he convoked another meeting, declared that they would not rest contented with the conquest of Peru, but would seize all the Indies; that a king was

necessary for such a kingdom, and therefore it behoved them at once to elect Guzman for their lord and prince. "I," said he, "for my part, do thus publicly renounce my allegiance to the King of Spain, and elect D. Fernando de Guzman to be my prince, king, and liege lord; in token whereof I now go to kiss his hand. They who do not follow my example have other thoughts in their hearts than what their words and their oaths have manifested!" No farther threat was needful; they followed him, willingly the most part, and the others with dissembled will, to Guzman's quarters, who, not suffering them to kiss his hand, embraced them one by one. The new king immediately appointed his household; he had his chamberlain, his high steward, his carver, his pages, and his gentlemen, to all of whom he assigned salaries upon the treasury of Peru. He was served at table with all the puppetry of a real court, and his orders were now issued in the

name of D. Fernando de Guzman, by the grace of God, King of Terra-Firma and Peru, and heard hat-in-hand. The plan of their campaign was now arranged; they proposed to make for the island of Margarita, where they knew no resistance could be made, and where they could stock themselves with provisions. There they would remain not more than four days, and, taking as many adventurers as might chuse to join them, proceed towards Nombre de Dios, land during the night in the river Saor, seize the passes of the Sierra de Capira, and thus cut off all communication with Panama; then turn upon the city, and utterly destroy it. Their next business was to get possession of Panama and all the ships in its harbour; there they expected to be joined by many volunteers from Veragua and Nicaragua, and by the negroes who were then in insurrection; and from thence taking with them the artillery of these two cities, they would proceed to Peru, where, even if

the alarm should have arrived before them, there were no troops capable of resisting such a force. So great was their confidence of success, that grants of land were solicited and given; and these ruffians agreed among themselves what women they would take from their husbands and fathers, settling every thing beforehand, that there might be no disputes upon that subject.*

They remained three months at this place, which they called *Pueblo de los Vergantines*, because of the two brigantines which they built there, each of three hundred tons. The hulks were by that time finished, and without waiting to lay the decks, probably because provisions were scarce, they proceeded on their way. Aguirre well knew that, in spite of oaths and signatures, there were many in the expedition who were utterly averse to his plans of treason, and who would gladly remain in the first good country they should

* P. Simon, 6. 18. § 4.; 19. § 1.

find; and fearing that this opinion would prevail, should they reach that land of the Omaguas, of which they had set out in search, and which, according to their Brazilian guides, was now near and upon the southern bank, he struck into a northern branch of the river on the day after their departure. This brought them, in three days, to a few deserted houses in a marshy country, where the air swarmed with musquitos, and where there appeared nothing convenient for human life. The houses were thatched with straw, which was remarkable, because for many leagues they had seen no savannahs where it could have grown, and all the dwellings which they had for a long time past were covered with some species of palm leaf. A few natives, too infirm to fly with the rest, were found here; but no inquiry was made of them concerning the country, for Aguirre and his party did not chuse to obtain information, and the others feared to ask any thing, lest it should be inferred that their

wish was to settle. Here they remained eight days, while Montoya was sent with a squadron of canoes to seek for food. The river abounded with fish, which the natives, recovering from their alarm, brought to traffic with; they were naked, and their arms and language like those of the Machifarans. At this place it happened that Pedro Alonzo Casto, who had been Orsua's *alguazil*, complained to one of his friends, that some office which he had asked for had been refused him, and, stroking his beard, repeated a line from Virgil, *Audaces Fortuna juvat, timidosque repellit*, —Fortune favours the bold, and repulses the timid. One of Aguirre's bloodhounds overhearing this, carried him the intelligence, and he ordered them both to be strangled. As soon as Guzman heard of this order, he sent to forbid the execution, but Casto was already dead; his companion escaped for that time.*

P. Simon, 17. 1. 2. 3.; 18. § 1. 2.

A day's voyage from hence brought them to the most extensive settlement which they had yet seen; it was an island between the river and the inundated low-lands, in length nearly two leagues, and with a line of houses the whole way: in the broadest part it was scarcely a cross-bow shot across. The natives fled, but were soon tempted to return, for the sake of trafficking with the soldiers, and stealing from them, in which they were equally bold and skilful. The punishment of such as were detected neither deterred nor offended them; their companions brought manatees, tortoises, and other food as a ransom, and as soon as the prisoner was at liberty he began to thieve again. They hired themselves to do any menial service; and such was their cupidity, that though some of their countrymen were wantonly killed by the tyrannical masters whom they served, it seemed to make no impression upon the rest. Here it is said that taverns were found; .. the same thing is said in

Orellana's voyage, and there also they are placed about the same part of the river: the fact is questionable, because it accords so little with savage life;* . . yet these people seem to have been thoroughly possessed with the love of gain, and the drinking-house would be one of the first establishments of trade. They had collected a great quantity of cedar-trees, as the stream brought them down, for canoes, and for the timber-work of their houses; and therefore the Spaniards determined to finish their brigantines here with these materials.

The wretched king of this tragedy, whose part was now soon to be terminated, chose for his court the largest and most commodious houses, which happened to be at the farthest end of the island. Montoya was quartered at the upper end, two leagues off; and Aguirre took his station in the middle, where he had the brigantines moored close to his lodging, in order, as he said, that the

* P. Simon, 6. 19. § 2, 3.

work might be carried on with more dispatch under his immediate eye. The vessels were decked here, and their sides raised, and they were ballasted, to fit them for the sea which they were to encounter. There were some five or six carpenters in the expedition, and twenty negroes who understood the same business. Besides these, it was only a few others who could be employed in this work; the rest had leisure for reflection. By this time Guzman was fully sensible of his own danger from Aguirre; the puppet-work of his mock royalty began to seem what it was; fear overpowered ambition; and, in this mood of mind, he relapsed into the opinion that the surest measure he could adopt would be to pursue the conquest, and, by his services, make atonement for what had been done. In this opinion all his friends were of one accord for their own sakes; for though his guilt might have been too great to be forgiven, theirs would be overlooked. A secret consultation was held in his quarters; they

resolved to find out the Omaguas, in pursuance of the object on which they had embarked, and to put Aguirre to death; because it was now manifest, that while he lived nothing could be done contrary to his pleasure. They proposed to send for him immediately, and put the sentence in effect without delay. His hour was not yet come; and Montoya observed, that this course would be dangerous; for, without doubt, he would be accompanied by some of his friends, and could not be slain without more bloodshed than was desirable. Better, said he, defer it till we are again embarked; and then the first time that he comes alone on board the prince's brigantine, he may be dispatched without difficulty or danger.* Fatally for all who were present this advice prevailed; it suited Guzman, whose crimes proceeded more from a weak intellect than a corrupt heart, and who was sick of guilt, because of the misery

* P. Simon, 6. 19. § 4.; 20. § 1, 2.

which he now knew to be its consequence.

Had not these men been infatuated to their own destruction, they must have seen that Aguirre was daily taking measures to secure and strengthen himself. If any man in whom he could not confide wore good arms, he took them from him, on pretence that they were not kept clean as they ought to be, and gave them to one of his own adherents, till he had in a manner disarmed all who might be likely to oppose him among the common men. He new-modelled the army, that no captain might have more than forty soldiers under him; this he did, that he might select his own company, and so pack the others that the men might be his security against their officers. Guzman's chamberlain*, Gonzalo Duarte, was the only person who made any attempt to check him in his career, and he besought the chief to give orders that no sentence

* Mayordomo Mayor,

should be pronounced by any other voice than his own. The instant Aguirre heard this, he ordered Duarte to be seized and strangled, but Guzman came in person and delivered him. Upon this Aguirre hastened like a madman to his presence, threw himself upon the ground, and protested that he would never rise till Duarte was delivered up to him to be punished for his many and heavy offences; otherwise, he said, they might take his head there as he lay, and he offered his sword for the purpose. Guzman, instead of seizing the opportunity, ordered him to calm himself and rise; they who were present interfered to effect a reconciliation, and Duarte himself said that he had little deserved this at Aguirre's hand, having so well kept his secret; "For when," said he, "before our embarkation, you would have killed Orsua, and made Don Martin general, friend as I was to Orsua, I never revealed your intention, nor did I ever till now let the secret pass my lips." This seemed to pacify the wretch;

he acknowledged that Duarte had kept his secret faithfully, and promised to requite him for it; and thus this disturbance ended without blood.*

Zalduendo was the next victim; the murder of Vandera had left him without a rival for Donna Iñes, and he had obtained her for his mistress. There was in the expedition a mestiza woman, by name Donna Maria de Soto, who was her friend and companion, and Zalduendo, wishing to accommodate them as well as he could, now that the brigantines were completed, asked leave of Aguirre to put some beds on board for them. Brutal in every thing, he replied, that there should be no beds on board, for they took up room which was wanting for things of more importance. When Zalduendo returned to the women after this fruitless application, he broke out in expressions of anger at the unexpected disappointment, and his words were presently

* P. Simon, 6. 20. § 3, 4.

reported to Aguirre, who had his spies everywhere. It was also told him, that on the preceding day, when Donna Iñes was weeping over the funeral of a mestiza girl, she had exclaimed, " God be merciful to thee, my child ! thou wilt have many companions before many days are over !" This was sufficient provocation for a wretch who delighted in murder, and he immediately assembled his ruffians. Zalduendo hearing this, knew to what end they were collected, and hastened to Guzman to tell him of his fears, and entreat protection. Guzman bade him be under no apprehensions, and sent one of his captains to Aguirre to pacify him, and obtain from him an assurance that he intended no violence. The captain met Aguirre with his band of assassins on the way; they heard his bidding, and learning from it where their victim had sought refuge, proceeded to Guzman's quarters, and, in spite of his commands, cries, and even supplications, murdered Zalduendo before his face. The

wretch then dispatched a mestizo, named Francisco Carrion, and Anton Llamoso, one of his serjeants, to kill D. Iñes, that no farther mischief might arise on her account. Not glutted with killing her, these ruffians repeatedly stabbed her after she was dead, as if they took an unnatural delight in mangling a form which had been so beautiful. They then divided her effects, which were of considerable value, between them, as the wages of their bloody work. Aguirre, meantime, remained with Guzman, and replied to the indignant reproaches and exclamations of the mock king by fresh insults, telling him he knew nothing about the management of an army, and that if he had had any proper sense of caution, he would never have trusted a Sevillian, knowing what a rascally race they were; this to Guzman, who was a man of Seville himself. He bade him be more wary for the future, and if he ever chose to hold a council of war, to let him know it in time, that he might bring with him fifty trusty men

in arms, ready for whatever might happen, for they were in the midst of enemies. After venting his rage in such advice as this, and in coarse jests of insolent malignity, he left his presence. As it was not, however, yet his intention to throw off all show of respect to the puppet which he had set up, he soon returned, and said that his Excellency had no just reason to complain of what he had done in his own defence, for Zalduendo would have killed him had he not been beforehand with him; and though both were Guzman's friends, yet he who survived was the most faithful, and the best able to serve and protect him on all occasions. With such speeches he reconciled himself to this wretched chief, who remained rather panic-struck than appeased, and who, from that hour, never lost the deadly paleness which then came upon him, nor ever again smiled or made a show of cheerfulness, but had the countenance of one aghast* ; neither had he sense or cour-

* P. Simon, 6. 21. 1—4.

age left to take any measures against the outrageous tyranny of Aguirre, or make one struggle in his own defence.

This pusillanimity accelerated his destruction. Guiral and Villena, two of his friends, who had been of the secret council where Aguirre's death was determined, believing that such a secret could not long be kept, thought to escape the consequences of discovery by themselves betraying it to Aguirre. The intimation startled him, for till now he had despised Guzman too much ever to think of him with fear; but now, when he was summoned to a council, he made answer, that it was no season for calling councils, and that he must be excused. The brigantines were now completed; he ordered all the canoes to be moored beside them, giving especial command that not one should be removed from that station without his permission; and he embarked his own baggage and that of his adherents, meaning, in case his designs should be anticipated, to get on board,

and leave Guzman with his party upon the island. Two nights before the time fixed for the departure of the army, he collected his adherents; and, having set a guard to cut off all communication with the lower end of the island, where Guzman was quartered, (which, on so narrow a slip of land, was easily effected,) he told them he had occasion for their help to chastise certain captains who were rebellious against the prince, wherefore he requested that they would follow him, and do as they were bound. With that, he led them to the quarters of Montoya, and Miguel Boledo, the admiral, which were at the upper end of the island, broke in upon them, and stabbed them both. This done, he turned back, telling his people that the same work was to be done at the other extremity of the encampment, and he named the persons who were to be put to death there, and appointed ten of them to each murder. It was remarked, that perhaps they might mistake one another in the darkness, and

some mischief might ensue; so he agreed to wait till day-break, having set such guard that no alarm could be conveyed. Nevertheless, such was his precaution, that, instead of passing the night on shore, he and the rest of his men went on board the brigantines, where they kept watch, ready at a moment's notice to cut their cables, and fall down the stream. At morning they landed to complete their purpose: two of his most intimate confidants were made acquainted with the design of killing Guzman, and charged with the execution of it; their names were Juan de Aguirre and Martin Perez. It seems as if he did not dare let this intention be generally known; for, as they were on their way to head-quarters, the wretch told his ruffians to have especial reverence towards their prince; and charged them that, if his Excellency, being of a tender nature, and not knowing the treason his captains had committed, should endeavour to protect them, they should be careful not by any chance to wound him while

they were executing their duty. The first victim whom they dispatched was Henao, the priest who had administered their oath of treason. They then entered Guzman's lodgings; he was in bed, but starting up at their coming, and seeing Aguirre, he exclaimed, "What is all this, my father?" for by that term he was accustomed to call him since the marriage had been contracted. The wretch bade his Excellency fear nothing, and past on to the inner apartment, where he slew Serrano, Duarte, and Balthasar Cortes Cano; meantime the two confidants discharged their harquebusses into the body of Guzman, and afterwards repeatedly stabbed him; thus concluding his miserable and disgraceful part of royalty.*

* P. Simon, 6. 21. 4. 6. 22.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE MURDER OF D. FERNANDO DE GUZMAN TILL THE ARRIVAL OF THE REBELS AT THE ISLAND OF MARGARITA.

LOPE DE AGUIRRE, who had now removed the last impediment to his wicked and insane desires, was at this time somewhat above fifty years of age. He was born at Oñate, in the province of Guipuzcoa, in the skirts of the town. He was of noble blood, but of poor parents. He had served in the lowest employments; and even among the infamous adventurers, who in those days swarmed in Peru, Aguirre was notorious for his evil qualities. In all the revolts by which that country was disturbed after its conquest, he had borne a part; sometimes engaged on one side, sometimes on the other, and acquiring an ill name with all. Personally, he is said to have

wanted courage, but to have been brave, even to rashness, when he had companions: this may mean that he fancied himself possessed of great talent for command, and was conscious that he was little capable of exertion. He was short and meagre, lamed by a wound which he had received in the king's service, when fighting against Francisco Hernandez Giron; and mean in aspect, but with a restlessness of eye, which indicated by how perturbed and suspicious a spirit that ill-favoured body was possessed.*

Immediately after the murder of Guzman, while it was yet morning, Aguirre assembled the army, and being armed at all points, and surrounded by eighty of his friends, who were armed in like manner, he proclaimed what he had done, saying, it was necessary for the success of their undertaking, which Guzman and his partizans would have ruined by their miscon-

* Piedrahita, p. 585.

duct; and that it could not displease the soldiers to have him for their general, because they must long have perceived how solicitous he was for their interests. Thus did he take upon himself the nominal, as he had long exercised the actual authority, unelected; and meaning, as he had won it by blood, so by blood to maintain it. And now he gave his soldiers the name of Mañones, a word of his own invention, which, being equally derived from one of the names of the great river, and from *maraña*, a trick, intrigue, or fraud, marks at once the baseness and the obduracy of a mind, which, in the midst of murder, could thus make its profligacy the matter of a jest. New appointments were made necessary by this new revolution: Perez, who had been one of the murderers of Guzman, was promoted to the rank of camp-master; Carrion, the mestizo, who had massacred and mangled Donna Iñes, was made chief *alguazil*. Only two of the former officers were permitted to retain

their situation, Pizarro and Galeas. The Comendador Guevara was deprived of his captaincy. Aguirre said it did not suit with his profession to follow the war in which they were engaged, and promised to give him twenty thousand pieces when they should reach Nombre de Dios, and then send him to Spain. Still suspicious of the fate he so well deserved, though he had well nigh disarmed all but his own adherents, he issued the same orders as after Orsua's assassination, that there should be no talking in secret, and continued on board the brigantines till, two days afterwards, they left this *Pueblo de la Matanza*, or place of the slaughter, as they themselves named it.*

He kept the left shore of the river, and took the left branch† whenever it divided,

* Pedro Simon, 6. 23. 1—3.

† There is some obscurity here in Pedro Simon's narrative, as if he were taking Aguirre by some cross navigation, (p. 473.) He was probably confused himself; for he had not made up his mind whether the Maranham were the Orellana or the Orinoco;

to avoid the land of the Omaguas; and, when smokes were seen by day and fires by night in some fair savannahs lying under the mountains, so that it seemed there were large settlements there, and the Brazilian guides declared that was the country which they were seeking, he forbade * all persons to talk on the

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(p. 482.) and, therefore, says he shall leave it undecided, and apply the name to both.

I should have had no doubt that Aguirre struck into one of those channels by which the Orellana and the Jupura are connected, and came out into the great river again at their junction, if a different opinion had not been expressed by Humboldt, who says, that Aguirre descended the river of Amazons, and reached the island of Margarita, "by a communication of the rivers of Guyana, of which, (he says,) we shall hereafter speak." (Personal Narrative, vol. ii. p. 220.) To me it appears exceedingly improbable that he should have found his way to the sea, in any other manner than by keeping the stream.

* A little exaggeration converted this into a new proof of the existence of El Dorado. Menasseh Ben Israel, who would fain find the Ten Tribes in this undiscovered kingdom, says that Aguirre sailed two days and nights between lofty white houses on both sides of the river, not daring to land be-

subject upon pain of death. In eight days they got among the islands of the stream; there were many yguanas in the houses fastened by the neck, and thus reserved for food. Aguirre's people, as if they had caught the purportless ferocity of their leader, attacked the natives, instead of conciliating them; a man and woman were all whom they could catch. One Juan Gonsalez Serrato wished to see the effect of their poisoned arrows, and accordingly taking one from the Indian, pricked him with it in the leg; the unhappy victim of the experiment died the next day. They stopt at a settlement where they found good store of provisions. The natives kept aloof in their canoes, and often threatened to attack them, but never ventured to make the attempt. Having taken one of

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cause of the number of habitations, and hearing constantly the noise of hammers, which seemed to be the sound of working silversmiths. He refers to the poem of Juan de Castellanos; and it is remarkable that he calls Aguirre *un soldado valiente*, without hinting at his crimes. *Esperanza de Israel*, p. 32.

them, Aguirre gave him some trinkets and set him at liberty, instructing him by signs that it was his wish to treat with them upon friendly terms. In reply, they sent two men, one of whom was lame, the other maimed and crooked, and these ambassadors promised that their countrymen would soon follow them in peace. The country round about was a high and dry level, surrounded with a forest of cork-trees. The people were called Arnaquinas; they were naked, excellent archers, and cannibals. The Spaniards also believed that they worshipped the sun and moon, and offered human sacrifices to them. They had good reason for inferring this, if it be true* that they saw one of

* I have repeated this doubtfully, having at first rejected it as false, as believing, that throughout the whole extent of country where the Tupi and Guarani tribes were spread, no traces of a ritual religion were found; and that from the Orinoco to the Plata, there was no other implement than the *maraca* used in the indigenous superstitions. But positive testimony ought not to be

their places of worship, where on each side of the entrance there was a large table,

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hastily rejected, and certainly should never be set aside, because it happens to contradict or overthrow a pre-conceived opinion. No such places of worship were ever seen by the Portugueze. But it is possible that, as imitations of the Portugueze worship were more than once attempted by tribes in the interior, the superstitions of the Incas, or the Zippas, or the Zaques, may in like manner have extended beyond the limits of their respective empires, while those empires flourished; or after their destruction, they may have been carried by those who fled from the yoke of the Spaniards to a great distance, and sun-worship, images, and human sacrifices may thus have been found on the banks of the Orellana. The Portugueze did not frequent the river till about seventy years after Orsua's expedition; and its whole course was not navigated again till the year 1637. In that time great changes might have taken place. Orellana is said to have seen many *roads*, indicating a population and a state of society, which he deemed too strong for his means of offence. In the account of his voyage, there are certainly some falsehoods. But Acosta says that the Jesuit, who was in Orsua's expedition, affirmed he had seen roads as broad and as beaten as that between Salamanca and Valladolid, (l. 3. c. 25. p. 182.) and this is good authority. Yet all traces of this civilization had disappeared before Teixeira's voyage.

one bearing the figure of the sun and of a man; the other those of the moon and of a woman, and with much blood upon the ground about both. They saw here a few nails and trifling instruments of iron, and the broken hilt of a sword; maize, mandioc, and yams, were in great abundance, as were also fruits and fish. The tide evidently reached this place; it was expedient, therefore, to prepare for the sea, and here Aguirre masted and rigged his vessels, for there was good timber at hand, and plants, from which they manufactured cordage; sheets and cotton garments enough were found to supply the sails. This was the occupation of twelve days, . . a length of time which could not be past by Aguirre without some murder.* A Fleming, named Monteverde,

* Aguirre gives a different account of the time and manner of this murder in his letter to the king. He says, at Margarita, " We received news from Spain of the great faction and scheme of the Lutherans. This news frightened us extremely. We found among us one of that faction: his name was

was found strangled one morning, with this billet upon him, *Por amotinadorcillo*, for a *mutineerkin*. There were some who said that he was justly executed, because he was a Lutheran. Cabanas was put to death next, one of the three men who had refused to take the oath of treason; then he murdered Diego de Truxillo, a captain, and Juan Gonzalez, the *sargento-mayor*: his plea was, that they were plotting against him; in fact, they were popular in the army, and Aguirre feared every man who seemed to have a friend. During their stay here he remained on board one brigantine, and Perez in the other; and

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Monteverde. I had him cut to pieces, as was just; for, believe me, Señor, wherever I am, people live according to the law." (Humboldt's Personal Narrative, vol. iv. 258.)—I have preferred Pedro Simon's authority to that of Aguirre himself; because, when the letter was written, he was probably as little able to recollect the occasion and order of his murders, as a drunkard would be to retrace the next morning, the order of the healths and toasts which he had drank over-night.

all except those in whom he had full confidence were kept ashore. One other murder was committed here, the only one of which Aguirre was not the author. Madrigal stabbed Serrato, who had been Guzman's chief *alguazil*, treacherously in the back. This base assassination was perpetrated in Aguirre's presence, who neither attempted to prevent nor to punish it. Here the Brazilian guides, knowing now the way to their own country, wisely made their escape. *

They laid in what store of provisions could be collected, and took some jars of good pottery to hold water. Before they set out, Aguirre took all their weapons from those soldiers of whom he had any doubt: then he set sail. They had not proceeded far, when it came into his head that he would have the Comendador Guevara killed. Llamoso, who was sent to commit this murder, began stabbing

* P. Simon, 6. 25. 4.; 6. 24. 1—3.

him with a blunt sword; but when the old knight intreated that he would not butcher him thus cruelly with such a weapon, he took from him his own dagger, and giving him several wounds with it, threw him overboard while yet living and crying out for confession, as the water closed over him. The manner of this murder served Aguirre and his camp-master, Perez, for matter of mirth and mockery when the two brigantines came together. In six days, they came to some Indian houses on the bank, which were well fortified, having loop-holes for the archers. Four Spaniards were wounded in an attempt to enter one; when a stronger force approached, the Indians fled. They found cakes of salt there, a thing which they had not seen before upon their way. The length of their voyage to this place they calculated at thirteen hundred leagues.*

They now got among the labyrinthine channels and islands near the mouth of

* P. Simon, 6. 24. 4.; 6. 25. 1.

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the river, and stopt at a little settlement, where the natives were naked, but wore a sandal of skins to preserve their feet from the heated ground. Their hair was sheared in circles, one within another, lessening to the crown of the head. And here Aguirre committed what Pedro Simon calls the worst of his cruelties; he left among these people above an hundred Indians of both sexes, many of whom were Christians, whom he had brought from Peru, and who were sure either to be killed and eaten by the cannibals, among whom they were thus abandoned, or to perish in that low and unwholesome country. His reason was, that they crowded the brigantines, and that there would not be provision and water enough for all. When this determination was made known, Pedro Gutierrez and Diego Palomo were overheard saying to each other, The servants are to be left here; it is best, therefore, to do it at once. A negro, who overheard them, reported this to Aguirre. The words must

have meant either an intention of deserting, or, more probably, of delivering themselves by putting the tyrant to death, and he therefore ordered both to be strangled. Palomo earnestly entreated that he might be left among the Indians, to instruct them in the Christian faith; . . an argument which had no more weight with Aguirre than might have been foreseen. As they drew nearer the sea, their dangers increased; the brigantines often struck upon sand-banks; a canoe with three Spaniards and several of their Indians was upset and lost; and many of the servants whom they retained were surprised, and swept away by the sudden tide, while collecting shell-fish upon the shoals, which were left dry at ebb; at length, however, early in July, they reached the open sea. From the day when they began their voyage late in September, till they reached the place of Tortoises, as they called it, in December, they had had very few showers; but, during the other six months, much and

heavy rain, with thunder-storms and violent winds. The whole number of Indians whom they had seen they did not suppose to be more than fifteen thousand; no gold had been seen among them except a few trinkets in the provinces of Carari and Machifaro; but earthen vessels, well made and polished, were found every where. Their voyage, exclusive of the time which they had halted, occupied ninety-four days.*

A new suspicion now came upon Aguirre. He feared lest his Camp-master, Perez, should desert with the other brigantine, and therefore took from it its compass, ordering the men to follow his vessel, and he would direct their course: nor was any resistance made to this act of suspicious tyranny, though its consequences might so probably have been fatal to all on board, had the vessels by any chance been separated. Provisions soon became scarce;

* P. Simon, 6. 25. 2—4.; 6. 26. 1—3.

the daily allowance of water was less than the quarter of a pint, and maize was counted out by grains; but Aguirre and those on whom he relied had no want. In seventeen days they came in sight of the island of Margarita. There was no pilot on board who knew its principal port, that of Pampatare; but as the brigantines drew little water, and it was fair weather, they approached the shore. A rough tide, however, separated them. Aguirre anchored in what was then called Paraguache, but now Traitors' Harbour, in remembrance of this event; Perez, in a port two leagues farther north, and four from the town.*

* P. Simon, 6. 26. 4.

CHAPTER IV.

AGUIRRE SEIZES THE ISLAND OF MARGARITA, AND MURDERS THE GOVERNOR. — TRANSACTIONS TILL HE EMBARKS FOR THE SPANISH MAIN.

HARDLY had the tyrant come to anchor, when he ordered Guiral and Diego de Alcaraz to be strangled; the former cried out so loudly for confession while they were endeavouring to pass the cord round his neck, that the murderer, fearful lest his cries should be heard on shore, and excite alarm there, stabbed him. Aguirre landed in the evening; he sent a soldier named Rodriguez, with some Indians of the island as his guides, to find out the Camp-master, and bid him come forthwith with all his people to join him, ordering him to strangle Pizarro by the way. At the same time he dispatched Diego Tirado to the city of Margarita, to say that they were come down the Orellana, and were in great distress for provisions, and to request a sup-

ply. The sight of his vessels in the offing had occasioned some stir in the island; it was feared at first that they were French pirates, . . then supposed, when their size was perceived, that they were for the pearl-fishery; but the manner in which they approached the coast made it evident that they were strangers. Some Indians were dispatched in a canoe to reconnoitre them; they did not arrive till Aguirre had anchored, and then he laid hands on them to serve as guides. Meantime some of the inhabitants set out by land to see who these strangers were. They met Tirado and his small party on the way, from whom all that could be learnt was, that they were come there by stress of weather, and in great want; and they proceeded to the port where Aguirre had landed with all his sick, and a few only of his sound men, the rest remaining on board and below deck. When they had greeted each other, the traitor told his tale, that they had set out from Peru in search of certain rich

countries, which they had not been able to discover; and thus having lost themselves, they had, by God's mercy, arrived there before all had perished, as in a short time they otherwise must have done. He besought them, therefore, to supply him and his people with meat and other necessaries for their money, that he might as soon as possible set off for Nombre de Dios, on his way back to Peru.*

Two cattle, the nearest which could be found, were immediately slaughtered and given to these suffering adventurers, as they appeared to be. In return for the good-will which was manifested in offering this instant supply, Aguirre gave the chief person of the party a scarlet cloak with gold lace, and a cup of silver gilt. This beginning so well satisfied the visitors, that they resolved to remain there that night, and they dispatched a letter to Don Juan de Villandrando, whose unhappy fortune

* P. Simon, 6. 26. 4. 6.; 27. 1. 2.

it was to be at that time Governor of the island, telling him that these were adventurers from Peru, who wanted provisions, but seemed to abound with riches, and to part with them liberally. Tirado had told only of the distress of the new-comers; the account of their riches excited a livelier interest, and the Governor, with Manuel Rodriguez, one of the *Alcaldes*, Andres de Salamanca, a *Regidor*, and three or four others of the most respectable men in the city, set out toward the port soon after midnight, choosing that time for the sake of avoiding the almost intolerable heat of the day. They were joined upon the road by many others, whom the same curiosity and hope of gain attracted, and at sunrise they arrived. Aguirre had still kept his main strength concealed on board; being now apprised that the Governor was come to visit him, he received him with officious humility, and his people at the same time took the islanders' horses, and tied them to the trees at some little distance, so that it

would not be possible to mount them suddenly and ride off. Presently the traitor, having gone on board to give his people orders what to do, came to the Governor, and, after a preamble of lying courtesy, said to him, that the soldiers of Peru, experienced as they were in war, prided themselves more upon wearing good arms than costly apparel, though even of that they had always the best; and that they now requested permission of him to land, and bring their arms with them, which would else be rusting in the brigantine; perhaps, too, some sports might be held with them, with the help of these gentlemen. The Governor, a young man, and fond of such spectacles himself, gave his consent. "Come, my Marañones," said Aguirre then, raising his voice so as to be heard on board, "sharpen your arms, and clean your harquebusses, which are damp with the sea; for you have leave from the Governor to land with them, .. and if he had not given you leave, you would have taken

it !" Upon this they appeared upon deck, and fired a salute; then began to land more weapons than there were men to use. The Governor, startled at the sight of a greater force than he had expected, and at such preparation, drew back a little and talked with his friends; but Aguirre gave them no time for deliberation. He advanced towards him with his men in battle-array: "Sirs," said he, "we are bound for Peru, as we told you, a land where there is never any want of wars and disturbances; and we are informed that you mean to impede our voyage, because you do not think we are going with any intention of serving the King; your lordships, therefore, must lay down your arms and be our prisoners, to the end that you may give us as good a welcome and as good treatment as is reasonable, and furnish us with all things necessary for our progress." It was in vain that the Governor and his people laid hands to their swords; spears, partisans, and harquebusses were at their

breasts; they had no alternative but to yield or perish. Some of the Marañones untied their horses, mounted them, and took possession of the road, that no intelligence might be conveyed to the city; and they disarmed all the islanders they met, and took their horses from them.*

Then Aguirre commanded his people to proceed in good order towards the city: he himself mounted the Governor's horse, and invited him to get up behind; but the Governor, indignant at his own misconduct, and the situation in which he found himself, refused. Upon this Aguirre, who, with the usual coarseness of his nature, seems to have intended this offer as a courtesy, said, we will go on foot then, and alighted. They had not advanced far before they met the crew of the other brigantine coming to join them, with the Camp-master, Perez, who, in obedience to his orders, had put Pizarro to death by

* P. Simon, 6. 27. 3—5.; 6. 28. 1.

the way. Aguirre soon becoming heated with the march, remounted, and again asked the Governor to get up behind, who now accepted the offer, fatigue and perhaps fear overcoming his sense of shame. All whom they met they disarmed. Perez, at the head of a strong party, pricked forward, and entered the city, crying, Liberty, liberty! Lope de Aguirre for ever! They took possession of the fortress*, then scoured the streets in troops, disarming all the inhabitants, and committing whatever outrages† they pleased. Aguirre was not long behind this advanced guard. Having placed his prisoners under good watch in the fortress, he went out into the public square,

* According to Gomberville (t. i. p. 56.) he made himself master of the island, by the assistance of a certain Jean Burq.

† Herrera says, that Aguirre protected the women, and would not suffer the ruffians of his company to offer them any wrong. If this be true, it is the only instance of humanity in this execrable wretch; but Pedro Simon, in enumerating the evils which the islanders suffered, speaks of their daughters being dishonoured.

and there ordered his men to cut down the gallows; but the gallows was made of guaiacan, an iron-wood, and they broke their axes upon it to no purpose. Next he proceeded to the treasury, forced the doors, broke open the royal chest, seized all the gold and pearls which it contained, which were of considerable amount, and destroyed the books. Then he issued a proclamation, ordering every inhabitant of the island to appear before him with all his arms of whatever kind, offensive or defensive, on pain of death; and forbidding any one of them to go out of the city without his permission, under the same penalty. He then sent a pipe of wine to the fortress, where it was emptied in two hours. An inventory was made of all the goods in the city, and the owners forbidden to touch any part of them as they valued their lives. While Aguirre was thus intent on plunder, he was not unmindful of more important measures; and he ordered all the boats and canoes belonging to the island to be broken up, that

no person might carry intelligence of his designs to the main.*

This miserable day was but the beginning of misery to the inhabitants of Margarita. The greater were the excesses of the Marañones the better was Aguirre pleased, and they who were the most atrocious were his favourites. He used to say that soldiers who told their beads were not fit for his service; he wanted fellows who would throw dice with the Devil, and stake their souls upon the cast.† Upon their fidelity he could have no reliance, and therefore he encouraged them to commit crimes which he thought would make them faithful to him, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. Many of the soldiers of the island offered to enlist under him, and serve him as zealously as his own people; he paid them in advance with his spoils, and they soon pledged themselves to his service by their crimes. This was a source of fresh

* P. Simon, 6. 28. 2—4.

† Piedrahita, p. 585.

misfortunes to the unhappy islanders; for these villains, knowing the country, hunted out the secret places where they had hidden their property, or their wives and children. These men informed Aguirre, that there was then at Maracapana, on the opposite main, a Provincial of the Dominicans, by name Fr. Francisco Montesinos, employed in converting the natives; and that he had a large ship there, which might easily be taken, and in which they might safely sail to Nombre de Dios. Upon this he dispatched Pedro de Monguia, with eighteen men, in one of the brigantines, to seize the vessel. On the way they fell in with a bark belonging to a merchant of the island, whom Aguirre had threatened to put to death, if the bark was not found: four of the party got into it, and returned to Margarita. The rest, when they drew nigh Maracapana, feeling themselves out of the tyrant's reach, began to talk of the desperate treason in which they were engaged: a few of them would still have per-

sisted in it, but the majority over-ruled them, and, instead of seizing the Provincial's ship, they told him all that had happened, and offered to obey him in any manner which he should think best for the king's service. The Provincial resolved immediately to go with the news to Burburata and to Hispaniola, and to pass by Margarita on the way, in hopes of being able to effect something against the traitor.*

Aguirre meantime, not doubting that Monguia would succeed in capturing the ship, ordered the islanders to bring him six hundred sheep, and a certain number of bullocks for salting, and to make him mandioc bread for the voyage, that he might be ready to embark without loss of time; each of the inhabitants was to furnish his quotum. The tyrant, with a capriciousness like madness, called these poor people together, and told them they must

* P. Simon, 6. 29. 1—3.

now have perceived that he and his companions had not come to that island to remain there or do them any displeasure, but rather with a desire to serve them in all ways. "God is my witness," said he, "that I did not think to tarry here longer than four days; but my ships were in such condition that it was not possible to proceed with them; and now that it has pleased God to provide this vessel for me of the reverend father Provincial's, I must needs wait for it, rather than build others, which would detain me here much longer. As soon as it comes we shall depart, and this is the reason why I have entreated you to get my sea-stores ready. And the reason why I have secured the Señor Governor, and those other cavaliers, is, that we might more certainly and easily be supplied for our money; for neither I nor my soldiers wish to have any thing that is not paid for to its full value. Now, I am well assured that, to please us, or perhaps for fear,

things are sold at less than their wonted price; for when a fowl is sold for two *reales*, it must plainly be to the seller's loss; and other things go at the like abasement. I command, therefore, that no fowl be sold to the soldiers for less than three *reales*, and every thing in the same proportion; and I pledge my faith and word, that at my departure full satisfaction shall be made for all that you have done or shall do for us!" Such a speech only added to the grief of these unfortunate people; it was so serious, and yet so evident a mockery, that it made the character of this strange tyrant more unaccountable, and therefore more dreadful. For while he thus talked of fair prices, and pretended to fix a minimum for their sakes, his soldiers were living at free quarters, and committing every form of atrocity. In such occupations they past the day, and by night lay upon the ground before the fortress; the climate required no covering; and this rabble, says Pedro Simon, had

all their lives enjoyed little better bedding.*

It was reported to Aguirre, that Enriquez de Orellana, one of the captains, had said he was drunk the day they entered Margarita. This was sufficient provocation; the offender was hanged, and his commission given to Llamoso. Terrified at this and so many other motiveless executions, four soldiers determined to desert, little as the chance was of escaping upon so small an island; their names were, Francisco Vasquez, Gonzalo de Zuñiga, Juan de Villatoro, and Luys Sanchez del Castillo. The tyrant fell into a paroxysm of rage when he heard that they were fled; he sent for the Governor, and threatened to destroy him and the whole island if the deserters were not discovered and delivered up, and he offered two hundred pieces as a reward for each that should be brought in. The wretched Governor issued orders

* P. Simon, 6. 29. 3. 4.

for the strictest search; the soldiers of the garrison, who had lately entered the traitor's service, were sent to hunt through the island, and fear and covetousness interested so many in the pursuit, that Villatoro and Castillo were found. Aguirre sent them instantly to execution, and fastened a paper on the gallows with this writing:—"These men have been hung for being loyal servants of the King of Castille!" and as he stood looking at their dead bodies, "Let us see," said he, "if the King of Castille can bring them to life again." Undismayed by their fate, an inhabitant of the city attempted to escape, and succeeded. Aguirre, after the keenest search had been made in vain, ordered his house to be pulled down to the ground, his fields ploughed up, all his cattle butchered, and every thing which had belonged to him to be utterly destroyed. Yet so much was he afraid lest others should follow his example, and perhaps seize his remaining brigantine, that he had it drawn ashore.

If the Provincial's ship should escape him, he expected some other would put into the island, of which he might make prize.*

Aguirre's conversation to his soldiers was of what their proceedings were to be when, after this happy beginning, they should land upon the main. They were to kill all the Dominicans and Franciscans, and all Religioners of every order except the Mercenarios, because, he said, they opposed the necessary liberty of the soldiers in reducing the natives to subjection. They then were to put to a cruel death all the Bishops, Viceroys, Presidents, *Oydores*, Governors, lawyers, and *procuradores*, on whom they could lay hands, because such people had totally destroyed the Indies. All knights and men of family were also to be slain, because they restrained the soldiers; and lastly, all common strumpets and women of loose character were to be executed without mercy, in

* P. Simon, 6. 30. 1—4.

vengeance for the mischief which Orsua's mistress had occasioned. Sufficient proof of his readiness to perpetrate these bloody resolutions was almost daily given by some new murder. A captain, by name Joanes de Turriaga*, was beloved by the men, and would occasionally have some of the poorer soldiers at his table; this was interpreted into the beginning of a plot, and Aguirre sent his blood-hound the Camp-master to dispatch him. Perez took with him a party of assassins, and entered his lodgings at a time when he was sitting at supper. Turriaga, having no suspicion of the fate to which he had been sentenced, rose to welcome him; but he had hardly uncovered his head in the act of salutation, before he was shot and stabbed almost at the same moment. He was a Biscayan by birth, and though this did not avail to save his life,

* This is probably the person whom Herrera calls Pedro de Yturriaga; he says that Aguirre put him to death for looking at him with an evil eye.

the capricious tyrant buried him with all the honours of war for his country's sake.*

The time in which Monguia might have returned with the Provincial's ship had now elapsed, and Aguirre began to be uneasy at his delay. This he manifested with the usual brutality of his nature, swearing that if the friar had either taken or slain his people, he would execute the most terrible vengeance upon that island that had ever been heard of, for he would put man, woman, and child to the sword, and make the streets of Margarita run with blood; after which he would destroy the city, not leaving one stone upon another, and set fire to all the plantations: and for the friar, if he could catch him, he would flea him alive, and make a drum of his skin. The furious gestures with which he accompanied these threats, foaming at the mouth with rage, made him appear like one possessed; and the wretched islanders began to despair of

* P. Simon, 6. 30. 3.; 6. 31. 1.

ever escaping alive from this frantic tyrant. Greatly did they rejoice when the ship appeared in sight: but their joy was of short duration, for presently a negro arrived in a canoe from Maracapana, who told Aguirre all that had happened there, and that the Provincial having given the alarm along the coast, was coming to attack him if he found opportunity. Upon this he immediately ordered all the inhabitants to be confined in the fortress, men, women, and children alike; many of them he laid in irons, and double fetters were put upon the Governor, and the other chief persons. The ship meantime was nearing the island, and he was assured that, from the course which she held, she must make a haven called Puerto de Piedras, five leagues from the city. Aguirre immediately stationed horsemen along the whole of the way, to inform him by signals when the ship came to anchor. As soon as that intelligence was communicated, he prepared to march against the Provincial; but, before he set out, his

diabolical mind was seized with a new fit of cruelty. He ordered the Governor, and those persons whom he had first made prisoners, being the chief magistrates of the city, to be brought from the apartment where they were confined into a lower hall. They, suspecting that they were led to death, came with a mortal melancholy in their countenances, which the tyrant perceived, and bade them have no fear, giving them his word, that, even if the friar were to land more men than there were trees and thistles on the island, and he himself and all his companions were to perish, not one of the prisoners should be hurt. This was just as night had set in; about midnight he sent Carrion, the murderer of Donna Iñes, with a set of fit companions, to strangle these persons, whose lives he had so lately and so solemnly promised to preserve. Their dead bodies were covered with mats. Aguirre assembled his soldiers in the hall; the mats at his command were then removed, and the

bodies exposed by the light of torches. "Here, my Maraños," said the tyrant, "you see another of the King's Governors, and these, his magistrates, lying dead. Let no man among you deceive himself with any hopes of pardon for such crimes as we have committed, nor suffer himself to be deceived by fair promises. In no part of the world can you possibly be safe, except in my company; for if it were possible that the King himself could pardon you, the friends and relations of those whom you have slain would prosecute their revenge till you were destroyed. Stand you then by me, as I will stand by you! let us run one fortune, and against such an union no force can be brought which we are not strong enough to overthrow." He then ordered two graves to be dug in the hall, and there the bodies were thrown in and covered up. Perez, the Camp-master, was left in charge of the fortress and the prisoners, and Aguirre set out at day-break,

with eighty harquebussees, towards the Puerto de Piedras.*

When he reached the port, the Provincial had made sail towards the city, which at that time stood by the principal harbour, but was afterwards removed three leagues inland. Aguirre marched back in haste, that he might get there before him. Perez came out with the remainder of the army to welcome him on his return, as if he had been long absent; he fired a salute at meeting him, and he entered the fortress with him hand in hand, where every thing was found as the traitor had left it. But it was now the Camp-master's lot to undergo that fate which he had been instrumental in bringing upon so many others. It was told Aguirre by Christoval Garcia, a captain of infantry, that after his departure Perez had feasted a party of soldiers in the fortress, drum and

* P. Simon, 6. 31. 2—4.; 6, 32. 1—4.

trumpet sounding, where they had agreed to kill their general, and sail away for France; a mestizo page of Garcia's confirmed the testimony. Whether there was any foundation for this charge, or the whole was a calumny devised by Garcia, in the hope of succeeding to the Campmaster's rank, was not enquired. A trifling circumstance served as some corroboration. During Aguirre's absence, some of the soldiers in the city were talking together, and asking who was to take the command in case he should be slain or taken by the Provincial; upon which Perez answered, "Here am I, who can do my duty if the old man should fail." This was enough; the tyrant called for one Chaves, a lad with scarcely a hair upon his chin, who was yet old enough in crimes to be charged with such an office, and bade him get some companions, and put the Campmaster to death as soon as he entered the fortress, whither he sent to call him. Perez, little suspecting that his hour was

come, hastened in obedience to the summons, and Chaves getting behind him, shot him with a harquebuss. The wound was not immediately mortal; the other murderers fell on him, and he ran from them about the fort, crying out for confession, and shrieking with the pain of a horrible wound, till he fell at length, and Chaves dispatched him by cutting his throat. The prisoners hearing his shrieks, expected that this was the commencement of the general massacre which Aguirre had threatened; they hid themselves under the beds, and in holes and corners, and some threw themselves from the windows and battlements. The soldiers in the square were not less astonished, hearing his cries, and being ignorant of the cause. Aguirre spoke to them from a window, telling them not to be alarmed at what they had heard, for he had been obliged to put his son and Campmaster, Martin Perez, to death for a conspiracy against him. Llamoso, who had

been named as an accomplice in the plot, happened to pass by as he was speaking. "They tell me, my son," said Aguirre, "that you also were in the conspiracy; was this then your friendship, and this all the regard you have for the great love which I have borne you?" Chaves and his comrades, whose weapons were yet red and reeking from the last murder, expected that they were now to have another victim, and drew near him, looking up to Aguirre for the signal to strike. But Llamoso, as of all these wretches he most resembled his master in ferociousness, so was he the only one who was sincerely and faithfully attached to him; and of this attachment Aguirre seems to have been sensible, by the manner in which he addressed him. He protested his innocence with the most horrid imprecations. The countenance of this suspicious tyrant did not yet relax; and Llamoso, in the strong passion of his fear, and his indignation at the charge, exclaimed, "As for this traitor,

who would have committed such a crime, I will drink his blood!" and throwing himself on the ground, he applied his mouth to a wound in the Camp-master's head, like a dog ravenous with hunger. The very murderers who stood by him drew back, sickening at the sight, and Aguirre no longer entertained a doubt of his fidelity.*

Contrary winds detained the Provincial two days on his passage from Puerto de Piedras to the port of the city. On the third morning he lay-to about half a league from shore, to be out of reach of shot. Aguirre drew up upon the beach to oppose his landing, with six pieces of cannon. The troops from on board came in boats near enough to carry on a war of words with the rebels, till Aguirre, seeing this was all the war he had to expect, grew weary, and, returning to the fortress, wrote a letter to the Provincial.

* P. Simon, 6. 55. 1—3.

The letter, which is in all its parts characteristic of the writer, began thus: .. "Very magnificent and reverend Sir; I should rather have received your paternity with palm-branches and flowers, than with harquebusses and artillery."—After a few other compliments it proceeded .. "We set out from Peru for the river Maranham, to discover and settle there; some of us maimed, some halt, and some of sound body, hoping, after the hard life we had endured in Peru, to find some land, however miserable, wherein we might rest these wretched bodies, which have more seams in them than a pilgrim's coat; and that hope having failed, here we are brought into such plight by the river, the sea, and hunger, that they who come against us must make account that they have to fight with the ghosts of dead men. And if the soldiers of your paternity call us traitors, you ought to correct them, for to attack Don Philip King of Castille,

is the enterprize of generous and great minds. If we had any base occupations, we might have found maintenance thereby; but it is our misfortune to know no other trade than that of making bullets and sharpening lances, which are the money that passes current here; and if you want any of such small change yonder, we will supply you with it." Then he spoke of those who had deserted him and were now with the Provincial, saying, he would send him copies of all the papers which they had signed, when each man, of his free choice, threw off his allegiance to Spain, and took the oaths to Don Fernando de Guzman. He then recapitulated the various acts of treason which these deserters had committed. Of one he said, "Gutierrez is a man, who, when there is any thing to eat, is diligent, and in time of battle always runs away; but his handwriting cannot run away. There is only one of them whom I wish we had here,

and that is Salguero; we want him greatly to take care of the sheep for us, a business which he understands well. I kiss the hands of my good friends Martin Bruno, and Anton Perez, and Andres Diaz. For Monguia and Artiaga, God forgive them their sins! for if they were alive, I hold it impossible that they should have renounced me. I beseech your paternity to certify me of their life or death, though I could wish we were all together, and your paternity were our patriarch. Write me an answer, and let us treat each other well, and so let the war go on; for as for those who are traitors, God will give them their punishment; and the King will restore his loyal subjects to life, though indeed we have not yet seen that he has raised any of them from the dead, nor healed their wounds." *

To this strange letter the Provincial

* P. Simon, 6.35. 4.; 6. 36. 1.2.

replied, advising Aguirre to return to his allegiance, or, if he persisted in his rebellion, exhorting him, as a Christian, to respect the churches and the honour of the women; and beseeching him for the love of that Lord God, who would one day require strict account for all, that he would cease to shed blood and perpetrate cruelties in that island. Having sent this answer, he sailed for Maracapana, and then for Hispaniola, to carry the alarm, making no farther attempt to reduce the Marañones than this mischievous appearance before the island, which proved the occasion of so many deaths. While Aguirre was waiting for the letter, it was told him that two of his men were sitting under the shade of some high thistles upon the beach, and that it was supposed they were hiding themselves in the hope of deserting to the ship; upon this charge they were both hanged. The tyrant now began to devise other means for quitting

Margarita; one of his brigantines he had lost, and had destroyed the other, lest more of his people should desert in her. There were only three small barks in his possession, and these were not sufficient to carry them and their stores; there happened, however, to be a ship upon the stocks, which the late Governor had been building. The carpenters who had been employed upon it had secreted themselves; Aguirre urged the inhabitants to seek for them, and promised them good treatment if they would come and complete the work: eager to rid themselves of the tyrant and his ruffians, the poor islanders made diligent search; some of them were found, and the work went on. Meantime some new act of rage or cruelty was every day perpetrated; for every inhabitant fled who could, and if Aguirre could not wreak his vengeance upon them in person, it fell upon their possessions: their houses were rased, their flocks and herds slaughtered, their plantations burnt or rooted up. There

was a cousin-german of Orsua, by name Martin Diaz de Armendariz, who had shared all Orsua's fortunes, and from the time of his murder, had been kept as a prisoner. The tyrant had given him permission to remain here in the island, ordering him to go out of the city, and reside peaceably at a farm, as long as the army continued there. But no mood of mercy lasted long in this immitigable wretch, and he now sent to have him strangled.*

Next he would have three banners made, which were of black silk, bearing bloody swords laid across, to signify the slaughter which he should make, and the mourning which he should occasion; and in one of his strange humours he would have these banners consecrated in the church, as if they were designed to be carried against the enemies of the faith. The day of the assumption of the Virgin Mary was fixed upon for this ceremony,

* P. Simon, 6. 36. 3. 4.; 6. 37. 1.

and Aguirre marched at the head of his whole force to church. On the way, he happened to see an old king of spades lying in the street, upon which he began kicking it like an idiot, swearing at the King of Castille; then took it up, and, with demonstrations of great fury, tore it in pieces. After this folly, he proceeded and heard high mass; and taking the banners from the poor terrified priest who had officiated, delivered them to his captains, and made them an harangue, charging them to respect the women and the churches*, and in all other things to follow their own inclinations; for they had made a new King, and might therefore make new laws for themselves. †

There was among the Marañones one

* Pedro Simon here observes, how infinitely thankful we ought to be to God, that these tyrants did not take it in their heads to introduce any heretical opinions; there being so much reason to apprehend this among other miserable effects of their unbridled licentiousness.

† P. Simon, 6. 37. 2. 3.

Alonso de Villena, who had borne a distinguished part in all their mutinies and cruelties, but who had now unintentionally incurred the displeasure of Aguirre, and received from him words of severe reprehension. Villena well knew that Aguirre's displeasure would not long be satisfied with venting itself in words alone; and finding himself thus in danger, resolved, if he could escape, to secure a pardon for his past offences. With this intent, he spread abroad a report among the inhabitants that he intended to kill Aguirre; not that the man had courage enough to set his life upon the hazard, but in order that they might willingly assist in concealing him, which else they would not have done, and that they might afterwards report it in his favour. The report was not long in reaching Aguirre: this Villena expected; he had his intelligencers upon the watch, and as soon as orders were given to put him to death, escaped by a postern, and got into the woods. His

escape, and the stratagem which he had practised, occasioned many deaths; two of his comrades were the first victims. Juan de Aguirre was sent to dispatch them: he stabbed the one and strangled the other. Then Anna de Roxas suffered, a respectable woman, in whose house Villena had quartered himself. Because she had not given information of designs which in reality she had never known, the tyrant sent her to the gallows; and as she was hanging there half dead, his ruffians shot at her as a mark, the wretch himself looking on, and applauding those who took the surest aim. Her husband, a sickly old man, was at a farm in the country, and Paniagua, the *Barrachel*, or provost-marshal of the camp, was sent to execute him also: this blood-hound finding a Dominican priest with him, strangled him too, without orders. Aguirre, when he heard this, as if he had been ashamed that any one should anticipate him in wickedness,

rejoiced that he had found a fellow who had no scruples at murdering a priest; and sent him to execute another Dominican, to whom he had lately thought proper to confess. The friar, discharging his duty, had given him such admonition as his state of life required, and now suffered for an offence which he had thus been compelled to commit.

There was an old soldier among the Marañones, by name Sumorostro; age and the hardships of the voyage had made him infirm, and that infirmity perhaps had wakened him to a sense of humanity; he went to Aguirre, and, saying that he was too old and feeble to bear the fatigues of war, requested permission to remain in the island. The tyrant told him he was perfectly at liberty so to do, and wished him well; but as the old man went away rejoicing in his answer, Aguirre made a sign to some of his ruffians, and bade them follow and secure him from any vengeance which the islanders and magistrates might

be disposed to take when they were gone. They understood the look which accompanied the speech, carried Sumorostro to the gallows, and there left him hanging, as an example to all who might think of asking for their dismissal. The list of executions was closed by that of another woman, because a soldier who lodged in her house had deserted. His tyranny now assumed a different character; he sent for a youth of the city, and after severely reprimanding him for not having waited upon him to pay his respects, and bid him welcome upon his arrival, ordered him to be shaved, which was a signal for one of his ruffians to smear his face with ordure; and the youth was then commanded to requite the barber with two couple of fowls for his trouble. The same beastly jest was then practised upon one of his soldiers, one Alonso Cayado, a man of better nature than the rest, who retired as much as possible from the sight of the murders which were daily perpetrated.

Having thus incurred the displeasure of this monster, he was happy in feeling no heavier effects from it.*

The ship was now launched, and they were ready to embark, when a bolder enemy than the Provincial came against them. One Francisco Faxardo, of Caraccas, having heard the alarm, collected a few settlers from that neighbourhood, and a large force of Indian archers, and crossed over to Margarita in canoes. He came in happy time for Pedro Alonso Galeas, one of the few friends of Orsua whom the tyrant had still spared. Aguirre meeting him one day, asked him if he had a banner, and being answered that he had not, gave him silk to make one. A few days afterwards he met him again, and asked if he had a drum. Galeas replied, he had only the case, but no parchment. "By God's life," exclaimed the fierce tyrant, "if I lay hands on you I will

* P. Simon, 6.37. 4.; 6.38. 1—3.

make your skin into parchment, and cover the case with that!" Galeas made the best excuse he could, and parted from him, not without great fear. Presently one of his friends met him, and, without stopping, said as he passed, "Take care, Pedro Alonso; they mean to kill you." He waited for no further warning; but escaped out of the town in the darkness, and got to the beach just as Faxardo came to shore. They landed and took possession of a little eminence, within hearing of the fort, from whence they called out to Aguirre's men, promising to protect and favour all who would come over to the king's banners. The tyrant had his men within walls, and was too vigilant for any to desert from him; he did not venture to attack Faxardo, because he could not tell what force he might have brought; on the water he had no fear of him, but he dared not venture through the gate of the fortress to embark. He therefore broke a way out through the

wall above the water, and made his men descend by a ladder, and embark, immediately; he himself, with a few of his chosen friends, remaining the last on shore. Yet even these last minutes were to have their murder. His admiral, Alonso Rodriguez, a wretch who had been conspicuous in this long series of crimes, had offended Aguirre, by saying, that three horses and a mule which he had sent on board took up too much room. It now happened that as they were at the water edge, he told him to draw back or the waves would wet him; and the tyrant instantly drew his sword, as if he had been insulted, and wounded him in the arm. His first impulse seemed to be sorrow that he had thus indulged his anger, and he gave orders that the wound should be dressed; but presently recollecting that such an injury was not likely to be forgotten, he bade them put Rodriguez to death. This done, he forced the parish priest of Margarita on board,

and then set sail. He had remained forty days in the island; the havoc which he made there was not recovered in half a century; his force when he arrived was about two hundred men, he departed with only a hundred and fifty, among whom were twelve or thirteen of those who had enlisted with him: many more had joined him, but had deserted in time, and his numbers had been thus lessened as much by his own cruelty as by desertion.*

* P. Simon, 6.45.3 ; 6.38.4.; 6.39.1.2.

CHAPTER V.

ALARM IN THE NUEVO REYNO.—AGUIRRE LANDS AT BURBURATA, AND ADVANCES TO VALENCIA.

THE Provincial, meantime, had informed the governor of Venezuela, the Licentiate Pablo Collado, of Aguirre's proceedings, and of the probability that he would attempt to make his way through the *Nuevo Reyno* to Peru. The intelligence was dispatched with all speed to Santa Fe, and excited great alarm in the Royal Audience of that city. There could be no doubt of Aguirre's rebellion, nor of his desperate character: but it was not known how greatly his numerical force had been diminished by his own frantic cruelties: nor how little capable he was in the state of frenzy which unbridled wickedness had produced, of forming any reasonable plan of operations, and conducting it with common prudence and ability. The

Auditors knew that he was a soldier of great experience in the Indies, and therefore they could not think it possible, that he should dream of marching across the continent to Peru. His plan, they reasoned, must have been to seize upon Nombre de Dios, and so make himself master of Panama: this he could no longer hope to accomplish, after the Provincial had given the alarm: of necessity, therefore, he would land at Burburata, the nearest port, where no resistance could be opposed; and the probable course that he might be expected to pursue would be to establish himself in some rich province; Merida they thought, or Pamplona. There were but too many discontented spirits in the *Nuevo Reyno* who would flock to him; and though it was uncertain what his present force was, in prudence and in reason they ought to believe it formidable, and provide against it accordingly. For the expedition had been raised in a country where there was no lack,

either of men or arms; and it was designed for the conquest of the powerful empire of the Omaguas, an object which would necessarily require an armament of considerable strength. It behoved them, therefore, to bring against him the whole force of the kingdom, taking care only not to leave the towns and cities without means of defence: and they ought to bear in mind that wild as was the intention of proceeding to Peru, they knew not to what desperate resolutions a man like Aguirre might resort, if Peru were his original object, and no other way to it were open.*

The Auditors, therefore, dispatched advices to the governors of Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Popayan, that they might be upon their guard, in case Aguirre should enter their provinces. They ordered Pedro Bravo de Molina not to leave Merida, a city which was but recently

* Piedrahita, p. 1. l. 12. c. 8.

founded: he might be more serviceable by remaining on the spot to defend it, and by sending timely information of the rebel's movements, than by joining the Governor of Venezuela with the little force which was at his disposal. They instructed all the other towns and cities to hold their force ready to march wherever they might be wanted, reserving only sufficient men for their own security. The troops which could thus be brought into the field were estimated at two hundred horse, four hundred pikemen, two hundred and fifty harquebusseers, and as many men armed with swords and bucklers as made the whole number amount to fifteen hundred. The conqueror, then holding the rank of marshal, D. Gonzalo Ximenez de Quesada was appointed to the command. Preparations were made with a good will, and with such lavish cost in arms, horses, and military trappings, at the expence of the individuals, (for the whole charge was undertaken by the people, without the

slightest disbursement on the part of government,) that the inhabitants of Santa Fe long felt the weight of the debts which were then contracted. The wise precaution was taken, of apprehending all persons who had been implicated in the Peruvian rebellions, and in that of Alvaro de Hoyon in Popayan. It was deliberated where to give battle to the rebel. Some proposed the valley of Cerinza, about fifty miles from the city of Tunja as the best place, because the open country there would enable them to avail themselves of their horse. Others deemed it more advisable to meet him before he had penetrated so far into the land; therefore they thought the valley of Cucuta a better position: it had the same advantage of surface as Cerinza, and the further one, that when the enemies arrived there, they would be fatigued by the rough and difficult journey, which they should have just performed. These different opinions were maintained with much heat: quarrels and challenges

ensued, and Quesada was at length obliged to forbid any further discussion on that subject, on pain of death, till more information should be received of Aguirre's movements.*

It had been Aguirre's first intention to make for Nombre de Dios, cross to Panama, and from thence invade Peru. But well knowing now that these cities on the isthmus must have received the alarm, and that the passes would be occupied, he at once determined upon an enterprise infinitely more difficult, . . that of landing at Burburata, as the Provincial had foreseen, and proceeding through the Nuevo Reyno de Granada and Popayan, conquering as he went. Yet at the moment when he resolved upon this desperate attempt, so little was his confidence in his people, that he would not trust any vessel but his own with compass or chart, ordering the others to follow him. There was so

* Piedrahita, p. 1. l. 12. c. 8.

little wind that they were eight days upon a passage which was usually performed in two; the madman sometimes accused his pilots and seamen for this, sometimes his Maker, and vented his impatience in the strangest blasphemies. Sometimes he declared, that if God had made heaven for such a set of poor wretches as those who were in his company, he never wished to go there; sometimes he would look up to the sky, and exclaim, "God, if thou hast any good to do me, do it at once, and keep salvation for your Saints!" at other times, seeing that the calm still continued, he would swear that God was a turncoat; for first he had been on their side, and now was gone over to the King's. On the eighth evening they anchored in the port of Burburata, and immediately landed. As the last action which Aguirre had committed before his embarkation was a murder, so here a murder was the first when he got to shore. A Portugueze, one of those who had joined him in Mar-

garita, asked when he landed, whether this was an island or the main-land; and as if ignorance had been a crime, the tyrant ordered him to be slain. The houses had all been forsaken, for the alarm was general along the coast, and as soon as his vessels appeared in sight, all the inhabitants fled. There was a merchant-ship in the harbour, which the owners sunk on his approach, having taken all out of it which they could remove; it was in shoal water, so that part of the works were dry. Aguirre set fire to it, and they took up their lodging that night upon the beach by its light. The tyrant was not without hope that the inhabitants would come to him, and bring refreshments to conciliate him; finding however that none appeared, he sent a party in the morning to search the town. They found only Francisco Martin there, one of Monguia's detachment, who had deserted from the Provincial, with the intention of rejoining the Marañones as soon as any opportunity offered. Aguirre

joyfully received him, and understanding that there were some of his companions in the neighbourhood who were of the same intentions, sent him in search of them, promising them great rewards for their fidelity.*

At noon he ordered his men to quarter themselves in the town; he himself remained behind them with his trustiest friends, and set fire to the vessels. Yet while he was thus imitating Cortes, and cutting off all means of retreat, he deemed it necessary to have a guard for his person, a precaution which he had never before required; for here, he thought, on the main-land, they who were loyal in their hearts might reasonably hope to escape; and it was to be apprehended that some of them, encouraged by this hope, might attempt his life. Francisco Martin returned from an unsuccessful search after his comrades, not having discovered one.

* P. Simon, 6.39. 2.4.; 6.40. 4.6., 41.1.2.

Parties were then sent to bring in horses for the baggage: in this they had little success; they caught ninety, but most were brood-mares, which had never been broken in; and some of the soldiers fell upon stakes covered with earth, which the Indians had laid for them, at the inhabitants' desire, and returned severely hurt.* At this the tyrant was so incensed, that he ordered war to be proclaimed with fire and sword against the King of Castille, declaring that every person who did not voluntarily join him should be put to death, and commanding his soldiers to give no quarter on pain of death themselves. This proclamation was made with drum and trumpet through the streets of Burburata. Meantime, one party of his marauders came to some plantations of Benito de Chaves, the Alcalde of Burburata, who had retired there with his wife and daughter, a young woman, married to Don

* Herrera, Hist. Gen. l. 9. c. 13.

Julian de Mendoza; the Marañones left them, and taking all the booty they could carry, took Chaves also, that he might give information respecting the country. Another party brought in an unhappy merchant, by name Pedro Nuñez, of whom Aguirre asked what the people of the land said of him and his companions. The merchant was afraid to answer, till being persuaded by promises of impunity, he replied, that every body held his honour and those who followed him to be a set of bloody Lutherans. Aguirre took off his iron cap, exclaiming, "Fool and idiot, art thou such a blockhead as to tell me this?" and was about to knock out his brains with the helmet, but he withheld his hand. This, however, proved but a short respite for Pedro Nuñez. A soldier in the general ransack found a jar of olives which this man had buried, and in which he had concealed some pieces of gold; the merchant was foolish enough to go to Aguirre, and request that the gold might

be restored to him, though the olives were eaten. Aguirre called for the soldier, who admitted that he had found the jar of olives, but denied the gold. Nuñez was then asked what he had stopt the jar with, he replied with pitch; this the soldier said was false, and produced a stopper of clay in proof of his denial; the tyrant then observed, that as Nuñez had lied in this instance, he would deceive him in others, and ordered him to be strangled.*

It was necessary to remain at Burburata till the horses could be broken in to carry the baggage. Meantime the soldiers searching every place discovered several pipes of wine in the woods: they boiled their food in it, that they might consume what they could not drink, and some knocked out the heads of the barrels, and got in to bathe themselves. About seven leagues to the east was a town called New Valencia; thither

* P. Simon, 6. 41. 2. 4.; 6. 42. 1. Piedrahita, p. 1. l. 12. c. 8.

Aguirre sent letters, ordering every inhabitant to furnish him with a horse, for which he would pay, and telling them, that by this act of obedience, they would escape the dreadful consequences of his anger, and all the mischiefs to which they might be exposed, if he and his men were to take that place in their march. No answer was returned, and this made him resolve to proceed there to punish them. As they were about to depart, Pedro Arias de Almesta and Diego de Alarcon thought it a good time to desert. Aguirre, instead of searching for them, sent for the wife and daughter of the Alcalde Chaves, and told him that these women should be detained as hostages for the deserters; that as soon as he would cause those soldiers to be delivered up, his wife and daughter should be restored to him; and that otherwise he would carry them on with him to Peru. And forthwith he began his journey, these ladies, as well as his own daughter, and all the women of the expedition who still sur-

vived, marching on foot. Three of his sick men he permitted to remain at Burburata, an act of clemency the more remarkable, because one day, seeing one of his men, by name Juan Perez, lying beside a brook, and asking him what he did there, Perez replied, he felt himself somewhat poorly, and it refreshed him to watch the running stream. "Sir Perez," said Aguirre, "if such be the case, you cannot undertake this expedition, and therefore you had better stay behind here in this town." . . "As your honour shall please to command," was the soldier's reply; but he, entering the town, told his executioners that Perez was ill, and it was proper that he should be cured; and he bade them hang him, with a scroll fastened to the gallows, saying that he was hung out of the way, because he was good for nothing.*

They had not proceeded far, when, from the ascent of a little hill, they per-

* P. Simon, 6. 41. 4.; 6. 42. 1. 2.

ceived a canoe with some Spaniards making for the port which they had left. Aguirre hastened his march till he had crost the hill-top, then bidding his men halt there out of sight of the port, he left them and returned with some thirty harquebusseers, to see if he could surprise the crew of the canoe. After searching all the houses in vain, they sate down to supper, and drank so freely from a barrel of wine which had escaped their former waste, that Aguirre got thoroughly drunk, and most of his party with him. Three of them, however, drank only enough to give them courage, and took the opportunity to escape. When the tyrant missed them in the morning he did not attempt to recover them, but remained still in the town, expecting that the people from the canoe would appear; but before the day closed, a messenger from the army came to recall him in haste, to appease some disturbances which had broken out. His men, after he had left them, had gone into the woods to seek for

water; it happened that in these woods some of the inhabitants of Burburata had secreted themselves; their Indians were on the watch, and as soon as they saw the Spaniards taking that direction, they fled farther into the forest. Their traces were perceived, and some of the Indian servants of the army sent in pursuit of them; in the search they found some deserted huts, from which they brought all that the terrified tenants had left behind in their flight, and among other things a cloak, which was immediately recognized in the camp to have belonged to Rodrigo Gutierrez, one of the men whom Aguirre had suspected of being most active in deserting with Monguia and the brigantine, and to whom Francisco Martin had imputed an active share in that desertion. Unhappily for Martin, there was found in the hood of the cloak a certificate of the good conduct of Gutierrez, and Martin's name appeared there as a witness of his loyalty, and the treason of Aguirre. Juan de Aguirre, who

was left to command the army, had no sooner read this, than he went up to this double deserter and stabbed him. Whenever death was to be inflicted, these wretches seem to have been emulous who should be forwardest in the bloody work: several shots were poured in upon Martin at the same time, and one which was fired by a soldier named Harana slew another man, who was under arrest as a suspected person. A tumult arose; some accused Harana of having shot the man wilfully, others said it was an accident; he himself declared that he had done it deliberately, and would answer what he had done, being certain the General would approve it. The majority, however, were strongly against him, and he thought it prudent to hasten to Burburata himself as fast as possible, and bring Aguirre back. His presence prevented any farther tumult, and the murderer remained unpunished.*

* P. Simon, 6. 42. 3. 5.

The way they travelled was steep and difficult, the climate oppressively hot, and the beasts, unused to burthen, could no longer bear their load. Aguirre, to relieve them, ordered each soldier to take a load, in addition to the knapsack and food which he already carried; and that the officers might be induced to take their full share, he loaded himself beyond his strength. This at length disabled him; they were six days on the road to Valencia, a distance of little more than eight leagues, so difficult were the roads, and the last day Aguirre was so ill that he could not support himself on horseback; he was borne in a hammock by the Indians, and the soldiers carried a flag over him as a canopy; even this motion fatigued him so greatly, that he was obliged frequently to make them halt in the shade, and frequently in the impatience of suffering, he cried out, "Kill me, Marañones, kill me!" They found Valencia deserted by all its inhabitants, who had fled to some islands in the

lake of Tacarigua; their main property consisted in cattle, which they could not remove, and which therefore fell into the hands of these ruffians. Here Aguirre's illness increased upon him; it would have been easy now for any one to have slain him, for in his carelessness of life he no longer retained any guard about his person, suffering every one to approach him without suspicion. The disease brought him almost to the point of death, but he was unfortunate enough to recover, and the usual violence and ferocity of his temper returned. His disappointment that none of the people of the land joined him, was vented in imprecations against them: cowardly wretches, he called them, not to unite themselves to a company which followed the laudable profession of war, . . a thing which men had loved and held in honour from the beginning of the world, which the four Elements themselves were continually carrying on, and which had even been practised by the Angels in

heaven! He sent a party to attack them in the islands, and bring away all whom they could take prisoners; but the lake was deep, and the fugitives had taken care to leave no boats. His frantic love of blood soon also began again to display itself; having issued orders that no man should go out of the town without his permission on pain of death, he executed the soldier who held the nominal office of paymaster for breach of these orders, though the man had never heard of the prohibition.*

Meantime Chaves, the Alcalde of Burburata, made diligent search after the two deserters, Pedro Arias and Alarcon, and discovered them; they probably taking little care to conceal themselves, as they could not possibly apprehend any danger from one of the King's magistrates. He put them in an iron collar, and gave them in charge to his son-in-law, Don Julian, to

* P. Simon, 6. 43. 1. 2. 4.

deliver them up to Aguirre, in exchange for his wife and daughter. On the way, Arias was so overcome with fatigue, and still more with fear, that he threw himself down, declaring he could go no farther. Don Julian replied, he cared not whether he could or no, for his head would be sufficient to carry to the general; upon which the soldier said, he might take his head then, for go he could not. Don Julian, without farther parley, drew his sword, lifted up the poor wretch's beard, and began to cut away at his throat. But when he felt the edge of the sword, the love of life returned, and Pedro Arias cried out for mercy: even though severely wounded, and fully certain that he was on the way to execution, still he had not heart to die, when death might be for a little while delayed. When the prisoners were delivered up to Aguirre, and the women set at liberty in return for them, he ordered Alarcon to be drawn through the streets, and proclamation made before

him, "This is the justice which Lope de Aguirre, the brave captain of the Marañones, causes to be inflicted upon this man for being loyal to the King of Castille; he orders him to be drawn, hanged, and quartered; let him who does the like suffer the like!" His head was fixed upon the gallows; Aguirre looked up at it as he passed by, and with one of his fiendish laughs exclaimed, "Ah, my friend Alarcon, are you there? how is it that the King of Castille does not come and bring you to life again?"* Pedro Arias had a better fate than he expected; he was a good penman, and Aguirre wanting him to serve as his secretary, gave orders that the wound in his throat should be drest. This man might well rejoice that he had not yielded to what might seem a reasonable despair.

The Alcalde Chaves must have been a wretch of Aguirre's own stamp; it seems

* P. Simon, 6. 43. 3.

that he thought the tyrant was likely to succeed in his enterprise, and was therefore resolved to render him all the services in his power. For the delivery of the two deserters there is some palliation, though there can be no excuse; but he now performed an act of gratuitous cruelty, for, having laid hands on Rodrigo Gutierrez, he sent to Aguirre, telling him, he had caught this man, thinking it would gratify him, and would detain him till a guard arrived to march him away. Few things could have given the tyrant greater satisfaction; he instantly dispatched Francisco Carrion with twelve men to bring this great offender. Rodriguez, guessing at the intentions of the rascally magistrate, took sanctuary in the church. Chaves had as little respect for religion as for law, and though the parish priest did all he could to protect the fugitive, Rodriguez was put in irons there, and a guard set over him. The guards were better men than the wretch who had placed them there; for

before Aguirre's messengers arrived, Rodriguez had rid himself of his fetters, and got into the woods. When Carrion returned without the victim, the tyrant bitterly reproached him that he had not killed Chaves for taking no better care of his prey: this was indeed the requital which he deserved.*

* P, Simon, 6. 43. 4.; 6. 44. 2.

CHAP. VI.

PREPARATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR OF VENEZUELA — AGUIRRE'S LETTER TO THE KING — DESERTION OF HIS MEN — HIS DEATH.

PABLO COLLADO was in the city of Tocuyo when the inhabitants of Burburata advised him of Aguirre's landing. He sent immediately to Merida for assistance, not only from Pedro Bravo de Molina, who had the command there, but also to Diego Garcia de Paredes (a man of some celebrity among the conquerors), who, because of some displeasure which had arisen between him and the Governor, had retired thither in disgust. Collado entreated him to lay aside all private resentments in this emergency, and come to his aid, promising him full satisfaction as to the matter in dispute. Paredes answered this appeal as became a brave and loyal

Spaniard: he set off with fourteen companions to Truxillo, a settlement founded by himself, there to collect farther help. The Captain Pedro Bravo presently followed him with five-and-twenty men, in disobedience of his orders from the Royal Audience: it neither accorded with his duty nor his honour, he thought, to obey those instructions, and remain inactive, now that the force of the rebel was ascertained, and when prompt measures against him might obtain a decisive success. Acting, therefore, upon his own responsibility on this point, he was not able to dispatch intelligence to Santa Fe, as he had been instructed, because an escort would have been necessary for the messenger as far as the town of St. Christoval, and men could not be spared for it, without leaving Merida too much exposed to the Indians. Collado, meantime, who was an invalid himself, and incapable of taking the field, appointed Gutierre de la Peña to the command

of the force which he could collect at Tocuyo.*

Some intelligence of these movements, partly true and partly conjectural, Aguirre received while he was at Valencia. The villainous Alcalde Chaves, supposing himself to be still in the rebel's favour, and desirous of conciliating him farther, dispatched a message to inform him that the Governor of Venezuela was raising an army at Tocuyo; that he had sent for succours as far as the Nuevo Reyno de Granada; that he had appointed Diego Garcia de Paredes to be his Camp-master; and that they talked of giving him battle at Baraquicimeto, or Tocuyo. This intelligence determined Aguirre to march for those cities without delay, and attack the enemy before succours could reach them. Contreras, the poor priest of Margarita, was lucky enough to obtain his deliverance before they set out; he found friends

* Piedrahita, p. 1. l 12. c. 12.

in the army to intercede for him, and the tyrant at last consented to let him return, on condition that he would solemnly swear to dispatch a letter for him to the King of Castille. The letter * has been preserved, and it is as extraordinary as the circumstances in which it was composed.

"King Philip," it began, "native of Spain, son of Charles the Invincible, I, Lope de Aguirre, thy vassal, an old Christian, of poor but noble parents, and native of the town of Oñate, in Biscay, went over

* Copies were current when Pedro Simon wrote his history, but he thought it too strange and treasonable to be inserted. The treason must have been very innocent threescore years after its date. Herrera also had seen it. Piedrahita had not, but he supposes it contained some of this madman's favourite sayings, such as that the King of Castille ought to show him Adam's will, in which he was left heir to the Indies, and that God had made heaven for him who should deserve it, but the world for him who could win it. It was printed for the first time in 1723, by Oviedo y Baños. His work I have not been able to obtain; but part of the letter, probably the greater part, is given by Humboldt in a note to the fifth book of his Personal Narrative.

young to Peru, to labour lance in hand. I rendered thee great services in the conquest of India. I fought for thy glory, without demanding pay, as is proved by the books of thy treasury. I firmly believe, Christian King and Lord, very ungrateful to me and my companions, that all those who write to thee from this land deceive thee much, because thou seest things too far off. I recommend to thee to be more just toward the good vassals whom thou hast in this country; for I and mine, wearied of the cruelties and injustice which thy viceroy, thy governors, and thy judges exercise in thy name, have resolved to obey thee no more. We regard ourselves no longer as Spaniards. We make a cruel war on thee, because we will not endure the oppression of thy ministers, who, to give places to their nephews and their children, dispose of our lives, our reputation, and our fortunes. I am lame in the left foot from two shots of an harquebuss, which I received in the valley of

Coquimbo, fighting under the orders of thy marshal Alonzo de Alvarado, against Francisco Hernandez Giron, who was then a rebel, as I am at present, and always shall be: for since thy viceroy, the Marquis of Cañete, a cowardly, ambitious, and effeminate man, has hanged our bravest warriors, I care * no more for thy pardon than for the books of Martin Luther.

"It is not well in thee, King of Spain, to be ungrateful toward thy vassals: for it was while thy father, the Emperor Charles, remained quietly in Castille, that they procured for thee so many kingdoms and extensive countries. Remember, King Philip, that thou hast no right to draw revenues from these provinces, the conquest

* Aguirre had some reason for saying this. The Marquis had put to death several persons, who, during Giron's rebellion, had accepted the offer of pardon, and gone over to the royal standard. The proceedings against them were secret, and the pretext, in one case, (that of Martin de Robles) scandalously insufficient.

Diego Fernandez, p. 2. l. 3. c. 2.

of which has been without danger to thee, but inasmuch as thou recompensest those who have rendered thee such great services. I am certain that few Kings go to heaven. Therefore we think ourselves very happy to be here in the Indies, preserving in all their purity the commandments of God, and of the Roman church; and we intend, though sinners during life, to become one day martyrs to the glory of God.

"But the corruption of morals among monks is so great in this land, that it is necessary to chastise it severely. There is not an ecclesiastic here, who does not think himself higher than the governor of a province. I beg of thee, great King, not to believe what the monks tell thee down yonder in Spain. They are always talking of the sacrifices they make, as well as of the hard and bitter life they are forced to lead in America, while they occupy the richest lands, and the Indians hunt and fish for them every day. If they shed tears be-

fore thy throne, it is that thou mayest send them hither to govern provinces. Dost thou know what sort of life they lead here? Given up to luxury; acquiring possessions; selling the sacraments; being at once ambitious, violent, and gluttonous; such is the life they lead in America. The faith of the Indians suffers by such bad examples. If thou dost not change all this, O King of Spain, thy government will not be stable." There is no reason why Aguirre should now have assumed a hypocritical tone; and, perhaps, his real feelings are more truly expressed in this letter, than in his blasphemous bravadoes.

He then proceeded to inform the King with great coolness of his exploits. "In the year 1559," he said, "the Marquis of Cañete sent Pedro de Orsua, a Navarrese, or rather a Frenchman, to the Amazons. We sailed on the largest rivers of Peru, till we came to a gulf of fresh water. We had already gone three hundred leagues, when we killed that bad and ambitious

captain. We chose a *cavallero* of Seville, Fernando de Guzman, for King, and we swore fealty to him, as is done to thyself. I was named Camp-master, and because I did not consent to his will in all things, he wanted to kill me; but I killed this new king, the captain of his guards, his lieutenant-general, his chaplain, a woman, a knight of the order of Rhodes, his ensign, and five or six domestics of the pretended King. I then resolved to punish thy ministers and thy auditors. I appointed captains and serjeants; these again wanted to kill me, but I had them all hanged. In the midst of these adventures, we navigated eleven months, till we reached the mouth of the river. We sailed more than fifteen hundred leagues. God knows how we got through that great mass of water. I advise thee, O great King, never to send Spanish fleets into that cursed river. God preserve thee in his holy keeping."

With this letter the priest was permitted

to depart; thankful to providence that his life was spared upon such easy conditions. Aguirre, the last night of his stay at Valencia, ordered his men to sleep within the court-yard of his lodgings, lest any of them should take that opportunity to desert; and being particularly suspicious of one man, because he had a kinsman in the Nuevo Reyno, and of two others, because they seemed to obey him with little good will, he had them secretly strangled. This done he renewed his march. There were scouts upon the watch to observe his movements; they, when they saw him entering among the mountains, hastened to Baraquicimeto, crying out that the tyrant would be there that day. The terrified inhabitants fled into the woods, and the alarm was carried to Tocuyo. The Governor and the General Gutierre de la Peña were then deliberating in that city upon the course to be pursued. They had determined to remove all cattle, and, as far as possible, all provisions from the

road which the rebels must pursue, and to offer a free pardon to all the Marañones who would desert the traitor, and repair to the royal standard, to serve against him. They were engaged in these deliberations when the affrighted scouts arrived, with the alarm that Aguirre was on the way to Baraquicimeto. The general instantly set out with all the force that was ready to oppose him there; and Collado was speedily relieved from much of his anxiety, by the arrival of Paredes with thirty-four men. The importance of such a reinforcement will be undervalued, unless the state of the conquests at that time be borne in mind. As soon as the site of a city had been chosen, and a gallows erected there, with the formalities which the law required, the place was called a city, and a municipality appointed, before a single hut was erected. The twenty men whom Paredes brought with him from Truxillo were, probably, the greater part of its inhabitants. Pablo Collado, as soon

as he saw Paredes, requested his pardon for the displeasure which he had given him, and entreated him to accept the office of Camp-master, saying that he had appointed Gutierre de la Peña to the command, because the emergency admitted of no delay; but that had he been present, he certainly would have been preferred. On his part, Paredes readily accepted the inferior charge; and he set out to follow Gutierre de la Peña.*

When that commander arrived at Baraquicimeto, he found neither enemies nor inhabitants there; so he quartered his men in the town, and feasted upon the provisions which their owners had left. The scouts who had given the alarm were panic-stricken, and had forgotten that a man in fear gallops faster than an army can march. Woods, mountains, and ways which were so seldom trodden, that no road was made, impeded the progress of

* Piedrahita 2, p. 2. l. 12. c. 8.

the rebels. Ten soldiers took advantage of this wild country to desert; yet was each so suspicious of all his comrades, that they stole away one by one. When Aguirre knew of their flight, it was hopeless to pursue them; and now, for the first time, a sense of danger seems to have come upon him: he discovered it by the most frantic gestures, stamping, foaming at the mouth, uttering the direst imprecations, and lifting a threatening hand against heaven. "Ah, Marañones," he exclaimed, "have I not said long ago that you would forsake me in the time of need, and that I must carry on war with the monkeys of the wood! Better had it been for me to have died, than to yield my life among such a wretched race as these people of Venezuela! O my prophet Antonio, truly have you prophesied unto me; and if I had believed you, these Marañones would not have fled from me now!" This he said, because he had a boy named Antonio, of whom he was very fond, and who

had often told him not to rely upon his Maraños, for they would desert him in his hour of need, and leave him alone. At this his Admiral, Juan Gomez, came up. "Body of God, Sir General," said he; "your honour has been playing the fool! if instead of three, whom you strangled the other day, they had been thirty, your camp would have been in perfection, and out of all fear of enemies; but, by God's life, here are plenty of good trees at hand!" At other times, Aguirre wanted none to instigate him to murder; but now he seems to have been struck with fear, and alive to nothing but his own perilous situation, so that the hint was given him in vain. *

On the third day after their departure from Valencia, they came to some hovels by the gold mines, from which every thing had been removed except a quantity of maize; this proved a seasonable supply, but Aguirre would have been better

* P. Simon, 6.4.1.3.4.

pleased had the negro miners joined him: he had with him about twenty blacks, under a captain of their own, and he had calculated that their fellows would flock to his standard, when they saw that he made no distinction of colour. The next day, a heavy rain fell as they were toiling up the mountain: the mules slipt at every step, and could not get on; the impatient tyrant broke out into fresh blasphemies;... "Does God think," he exclaimed, "that because it rains I shall not go on to Peru, and destroy the world? I shall deceive him then!" When his passion had abated, he made his men dig steps up the hill, in which the beasts might secure their feet; and thus, with infinite labour, they at length gained the summit. The van of the army, not having considered the difficulties which the baggage would occasion to the rear, was out of sight; Aguirre hastened in some alarm to overtake it; and coming up with his mayordomo and especial friend, Juan de Aguirre, and the

captain of his guard, Roberto de Susaya, "I prophecy, sirs," said he, "that if in this government forty or fifty soldiers do not join us, my Marañones are in such mood that we shall never reach the Nuevo Reyno!" Then pushing on to the van, he reproved them for their want of caution, and made them turn back to the foot of a mountain, where they halted that night. Proceeding from hence, they entered the Valle de las Damas, where they found a granary of maize upon the banks of the Aracui, and halted there a day.

Aguirre, who now began to apprehend the danger which he had despised at a distance, betrayed the state of his feelings by the desperate language which he used. Sometimes he exhorted his people not to be deterred from gratifying their inclinations in any manner by the fear of hell, because the mere act of believing in God was sufficient for taking them to heaven. Sometimes he said of himself, that he was assured of his own perdition, and was

already suffering the fires of hell while he lived; and, therefore, as the crow could not be blacker than its wings, he would commit such cruelties, that the whole globe should hear of his name. And here upon the Aracui, he called together those friends in whom he had the greatest confidence, and proposed to them, as a measure of security, that they should kill their sick, and those of whom they had any suspicion; in all forty persons. But they replied, that such a measure would lessen their security, inasmuch as those who were spared would fear lest they also should incur suspicion, and that fear would drive them to desertion. The reason was in itself valid; but it is probable that they who gave it were now beginning to think of desertion themselves. *

All Aguirre's movements were now known at Baraquicimeto. Pedro Galeas was with the troops there: Faxardo had

* P. Simon, 6. 45. 1. 3. Piedrahita, p. 2. l. 12. c. 8.

dispatched him immediately in a canoe to Burburata, and he having spread the alarm along the coast, arrived at that place just after Gutierre de la Peña. At first he was regarded with suspicion; but this wore away when his manners were perceived, and the real horror which he expressed at those transactions of which he had been an unwilling spectator. He assured the general, that Aguirre had not above fifty men who voluntarily followed him; all the rest acted under compulsion, and would desert him as soon as any force appeared to which they could look for protection; and he advised that no attack should be made upon him, saying nothing more was needful than to keep in sight of him; the victory might be gained without risking the loss of a single man. This intelligence gave no little comfort to the general and his handful of half-armed men. For it must here be observed, that trifling as Aguirre's force may appear to us in these times, it might at that time and

in that country have been sufficient for its purpose, had his own conduct been less atrocious, and his soldiers more faithful. Great efforts had been made to collect forces against him; there were, however, as yet no more than seventy-five men assembled, and these so miserably equipped that half a dozen veterans would have thought it sport to attack a regiment of them. It is true they were all mounted, but on horses never trained to war, and with the most wretched harness; they themselves, says Pedro Simon, were rather horse-loads than horsemen. There were but two harquebusses among them all: the one was without a pan, and there was scarcely powder enough for the other. They had no other weapons than rusty spear-heads, fixed upon shafts of their own making; and instead of helmets, they wore a ridiculous hat then in fashion in that part of the conquests, the crown of which was of four different colours, sewn on in quarters, and the brim of as many

more: it was made of cloth, and trimmed with cotton fringes. With about fifteen of these soldiers, Paredes, the Camp-master, who was himself a good officer, set out to reconnoitre the Marañones. Passing through a wood in the valley, where the path was so narrow that two horsemen could not ride abreast, they came unexpectedly in sight of the enemy. Neither party was prepared for this rencounter; Aguirre's men halted to take their arms and light their matches; the Camp-master's made so speedy a retreat, that some dropt their clumsy lances, and when the boughs struck off their fantastic hats, did not dare stop to pick them up. Such weapons and such helmets furnished the Marañones with matter for sport, while they halted beside a water-course, from night-fall, three or four hours, till the moon rose.

Paredes meantime having got out of the wood, and entered the savannah, thought at its skirts to lay an ambush;

but Aguirre having waited for moonlight frustrated this device, and the Camp-master therefore retreated with all speed to Baraquicimeto. It was then determined to abandon the town, where their horses could not be used to advantage, and the enemy's harquebusseers might securely annoy them by taking possession of the houses. The general dispatched intelligence to Collado, the governor at Tocuyo, and left behind him papers signed by Collado, in which he invited the Maraῆones to return to their allegiance, pledg-himself that they should receive full pardon for all the offences which they had hitherto committed. Such a measure had been successfully practised by the President Gasca against Gonzalo Pizarro in Peru. A longer letter was addressed to Aguirre himself; pardon could not so peremptorily be promised him, but the governor protested that if he would no longer persist in rebellion, no injury should be done him in that land, but that

he would send him over to the merciful feet of his Majesty, with whom he would be a faithful mediator in his behalf. If these persuasions should fail to move him, Collado besought him to spare the lives which would else be lost in the contest, and decide the victory by single combat with him. Having left this letter in a place where it must necessarily be seen, and scattered pardons among all the houses, the general retired about half a league, and took his station by a brook side in the open savannah. *

Aguirre meantime continued his march till noon, then halted about a league and a half from the town, loaded and planted his artillery in case of attack, and sent an Indian forward with a letter to the inhabitants of Baraquicimeto; in this he bade them not to be alarmed, nor desert their habitations; for all he required was, that they should supply him with food and horses

* P. Simon, 6. 46. 23.

at a fair price. If any soldiers were disposed to join him and proceed to Peru, he would give them honourable employments; but if the place should be forsaken on his approach, he would set fire to it, destroy all their cattle and plantations, and put to death in torments every one who fell into his hands. To this no answer was returned, and on the following morning he advanced towards the town, giving order that if any soldier went three steps out of his place, the next man should shoot him. As they drew near, Gutierre de la Peña came up with his horsemen, and took post near the town, just out of musket-shot, in a hollow. Aguirre fired upon them, rather to frighten them than with any hope that the shot could take effect, then marched with colours flying into the town. A few of the King's soldiers entered at the same time by the other end, and hesitated for a moment whether to attack the rebels; but they perceived the wisdom of their former determination,

and again retreated. Paredes, however, made a sweep round with eight horsemen, and cut off four of the sumpter beasts, who were partly laden with powder. *

In the highest part of the town was a house surrounded with a mud wall, which had battlements all round; a sufficient fortress against the Indians, and an advantageous post for better troops. Here Aguirre took up his lodging, and here he kept his men ready for battle, till night came on, and he saw that Gutierre, leaving centinels to observe him, retreated to his former position; then he permitted them to ransack the town. They found nothing except the pardons, and the letter for their chief, which they brought to him. Upon this he assembled them and said, "Sirs, you have seen papers, in which the governor persuades you to desert to him, and promises pardon for all your crimes. I am a man who have had some experience

* P. Simon, 6.46.3.4.6.47.1.

in these things; and this I can affirm, that the havoc which you have made has been such, that neither in Spain nor in the Indies here, nor in any other part of the world, has it ever been heard that men have committed the like; and if the King in person were disposed to pardon you, I know not that he could do it, much less then a licentiate with only two names, like Pablo Collado. Remember what such pardons availed to Piedrahita, Tomas Vazquez, and other captains; they also had them in the name of the king, whom they had served all their lives, and anon a lawyerling came, who had never been heard of before, and cut off their heads. These papers are gilded pills of poison. What we have to do is to stand by each other, and do our duty; whatever hardships we may have to endure now, there is plenty of all things in Peru, and there we shall enjoy them at leisure." He then ordered them to set fire to the town, leaving only a few houses, which would be advantageous

for his harquebusseers. The enemy's centinels, knowing for what intent he had left them, set fire to these also; the flames communicated to the church, which, like the rest of the town, was of wattle-work, and nothing was left standing except the fortress, of which Aguirre had taken possession.* Blasphemer as he was, he showed some marks of catholic feeling on this occasion, and when he saw that the church was in danger, ordered the images to be removed and placed in safety, to give some sign, says Piedrahita, that he had been born in Biscay.

By this time the King's troops had received a trifling reinforcement, of which the main value consisted in three harquebusses; and in the morning watch Paredes, with a detachment, approached to alarm the fort. Aguirre ordered forty harquebusseers to sally against them; they stood their fire, which was without effect; and

* P. Simon, 6. 47. 1. 2. 3.

the rebels, who had evidently now no heart to persist in rebellion, suffered them to retreat unpursued. Meantime Pedro Bravo de Molina arrived at Tocuyo, with twenty horsemen from Merida; and the Governor having collected between forty and fifty more men, whom the appearance of this reinforcement had encouraged to take the field, set out with him to join Gutierre de la Peña. They marched all night, the heat of the day being intolerable; in the morning they met a messenger from Aguirre with a letter to the Governor, written in Aguirre's usual style. "Most magnificent Señor," it began, "among others of your honour's papers which were found in this town, was a letter directed to me, and containing more fair promises and preambles than there are stars in the sky. As for the battle which you offer between you and me. if the King of Spain were to abide by its result I would accept it, and even give your honour vantage arms; but all these offers I hold to be tricks,

such as are practised with those cavaliers who conquer and settle a country, that your honour with your two names may come and take away what they have so painfully purchased. All we require here is food and beasts for our money; supply us with these, and you will keep your government and its towns free from the mischief which we must do if these are not provided. All we have seen here in this land tends only to spur us and give us wings to get faster out of it; for by the lances and helmets which some of your soldiers left behind them when they ran away, we have seen what a thrifty race they are. You talk of bearing arms against the King; if ever we had any obligation to obey him it is over now, for we have renounced him long ago, and have chosen another King; and, therefore, as being vassals of another lord, may make war upon him without incurring any of those stigmas which here are set upon us. To

conclude, I do not offer myself to be at your honour's service, because it would be held for a lying offer. Our Lord preserve the most magnificent person of your honour." When Collado had read the letter, he said before all his men, "Would to God that the fate of this war were to be decided between Aguirre and me; boaster as he is, I might perhaps have done with him what he says he would have done with me; but God's will be done, since it is his pleasure that for our offences the sparks of Peru should reach us even here." He said this with tears in his eyes, and with an agitation which his men imputed to fear; for the governor was a man of infirm body, in little repute for valour, and unpopular, because he was not of a liberal spirit.* For these causes his challenge was regarded as an empty bravado; its real absurdity had been exposed by

* P. Simon, 6. 47. 3.; 6. 48. 1. 3.

Aguirre, when he expressed a wish that the king would consent to abide by its result.

About mid-day he joined Gutierre de la Peña. Pedro Bravo entered the camp, saying that he had left in Merida an auditor from Santa Fe with five hundred well-armed soldiers, but that he had brought only two hundred with him, which he thought would be sufficient to watch the tyrant. This he said for the purpose of encouraging them, and dismaying the enemy, to whom he expected that the false intelligence would find its way. As he had calculated, a negro fled over to Aguirre as soon as it was dark, and communicated this news. He gave no heed to it, but it was believed by his men, who now began to think their only hope lay in obtaining a pardon as soon as possible. Fearful of this, he would not suffer a man to go out of the fort; on the third day, however, Juan Rangel and Francisco Guerrero effected their escape

to the camp; they declared that many were waiting only for an opportunity to follow them, and that nothing more was necessary than to watch the fort well, and prevent Aguirre from getting provisions. That same day Paredes and Bravo approached the walls with about forty horsemen, near enough to be heard by the rebels, and called out, bidding them save their lives by timely submission, for such forces were now collected against them, that they would otherwise soon be put to the sword. Some Indians of the rebel army were at this time washing in the brook below, and the Camp-master carried them off and all the clothes. Stung by the sight of this insult, Aguirre ordered Susaya the captain of his guard, and Christoval Garcia, with sixty men, to go out at night, as if they were foraging, and fall upon the camp during the morning watch. Accident frustrated this attempt. Some horsemen on their way to the camp came among some brood-mares and their colts, and

they flocked after the horses; the riders hearing their tramp in the darkness, spurred away as fast as they could go, and alarmed the camp, saying the enemy were upon them. Susaya was approaching on the other side, but he found the King's troops armed and mounted, in consequence of this alarm; upon which he retreated to a place where the bushes protected him, and sent to Aguirre for succour. Aguirre came out himself, and some shot were exchanged. His horse was killed under him, and two of his people wounded. None of his* own shot took effect. During the skirmish, Tirado, a captain in whom he had great

* The Bishop of Santa Marta says, that both on this occasion, and in the battle of Pucura, between the royal army and the rebels in Peru, under Francisco Hernandez Giron, an evident miracle was wrought in favour of the loyal cause. For the balls, in the one instance, appeared only like air-bubbles or foot-balls, when they were discharged, and in the other they were flattened when they struck the horses, as if they had been waxen pellets! This the bishop gravely relates as a fact, which is *muy de notar*. Piedrahita, p. 581.

confidence, and who had been active in atrocity, galloped over to the King's troops; and being well received by the Governor, joined in the action against his own friends. Deeply as Aguirre felt his desertion, he had the prudence to dissemble, and tell his men that Tirado was acting by his instructions. "Is it possible, Marañones," he exclaimed, "that a set of herdsmen, with frocks* of sheepskin and shields of cowhide, should face me in the field, and that you should not bring them to the ground!" † But he perceived that this proceeded not so much from an erring hand, as from faint hearts and wavering wills, and therefore retired into the fort.

Francisco Cavallero had attempted to follow Tirado, but his horse became restive,

* *Dezia esto, porque el uso de la Provincia es de andar a cavallo con capotillos de dos haldas de pieles de Leon, para defensa del sol.* (Piedrahita, p. 582.) *Pieles de Leon*, may perhaps mean sheep-skins tanned with the wool on, which I have seen worn in Leon.

† P. Simon, 6.48. 3. 4.; 6.49.; 6. 50. 1.

and could not be forced to pass something which had frightened him, and therefore he was fain to return, hoping his intention had not been discovered. Gaspar Dias, a Portugueze, who still remained faithful to the tyrant, had observed him; and now, as he was entering the gate, struck at him with his dagger and wounded him, exclaiming, Kill the traitor. Other weapons were raised against him, but Aguirre, either doubting that it had been Cavallero's purpose to desert, or secretly admitting that such a wish was now too natural to deserve punishment, forbade them to do him any further injury, and gave order that his wound should be drest. He reproached his men for a set of womanly wretches, asking them if they were making war upon Heaven instead of the King, for they had fired at the stars instead of their enemies; and warning them that if he was overthrown they would be the sufferers. Their excuse was, that the powder was bad. He now, almost desperate, with-

drew, and made out a list of the sick, whom he regarded as mere encumbrances, and of all whom he thought faint-hearted in his service, amounting to more than fifty; and he showed this to his friends, proposing to have them all strangled. From this resolution he was a second time dissuaded; they told him, he might perhaps kill some of his firmest adherents, for the example of Tirado might teach him, that they who made the fairest professions were not always the most to be relied on. He resolved, however, to disarm them, and ordered his friends to watch them well, and put them to death the moment they discovered any intention to desert.*

All dreams of conquest were now over with Aguirre; no adventurers had joined his standard, his veteran ruffians had been stopped in their progress by a handful of half-armed men, and to proceed to Peru was now manifestly impracticable. He

* P. Simon, 6. 50. 1—3.

determined to march back to the coast, seize shipping wherever he could find it, and follow some new course of life. Meantime he kept strict watch within the fort, that none of his people might escape, not daring to let them go in search of provisions; they killed the dogs and horses for food, and this rigour made even some of his guards desert him. In the hope of rousing their courage, and keeping up their spirits by action, he ordered twenty harquebusseers to attack Paredes and Pedro Bravo, who with some of their people had drawn nigh to observe the enemy's movements. The two parties approached near enough to engage in railing; for which Pedro Bravo reproved his men, saying it was not like brave men to insult their enemies; and that they were especially wrong in giving the opprobrious appellation of traitors to Spaniards who, by fair words and generous treatment, might be reclaimed to their duty; but who, as they now saw, were provoked by such language,

and being put upon their metal, were preparing to answer with powder and ball. While he was speaking, a mestizo of the enemy's party, by name Juan de Lescano, perceiving that he appeared to be a man of some rank, took aim at him and shot his horse. Pedro Bravo was not hurt by the fall; but he thought it prudent to retire out of the reach of danger, for it was now apparent, from what he knew of the state of the enemy, that they might be reduced without bloodshed. *

Aguirre himself was well aware that this must be the issue, unless he could withdraw his people in time. On the fifth day, therefore, after his arrival at Baraquicimeto, in the morning, having taken their arms from most of the soldiers, and loaded them upon the beasts that remained, he prepared to set out. This last act of suspicion completed his ruin: the men asked if he was leading them to slaughter,

* P. Simon, 6. 50. 4. Piedrahita, p 2. l. 12. c. 8.

that they were thus to go forth unarmed? Their pride also was wounded; it was disgraceful, they said, to turn back, as if they wanted courage to proceed. These things were said so loudly, and discontent was so nearly ripening into open mutiny, that the falling tyrant delivered them their arms again, craving pardon for what he had done, and saying this was a fault, but it was the only one which he had committed in the whole course of the expedition. There were some who sullenly refused to receive their arms, till Aguirre condescended personally to entreat them.*

At this time Paredes and Bravo again came up to the fort, having been informed of his intended retreat by the deserters; they called out to the soldiers, warning them not to be deceived longer by the traitor, but come over at once to the King's standard, while a free pardon was yet to be obtained. There were more

* P. Simon, 6. 50. 4.

Indians again washing in the river, and Paredes, thinking to make a second spoil, rode towards them with a small detachment, ordering those whom he left to make a signal, by holding up a drawn sword, if any of Aguirre's people should sally out against him. His movement was observed from the fort, and Juan Jeronymo de Espindola was sent with fifteen harquebusseers to protect the Indians. The signal was made; Paredes, however, only spurred on to perform his work the sooner; but coming in sight of Espindola, and perceiving that his own men could not withstand the superior arms of the rebels, he retreated. Espindola and his party quickened their pace, and when they came near cried out "Long live the King! Cavaliers, long live the King!" Paredes immediately halted, his men took the deserters up behind them, and rode up the hill to their comrades, and Espindola then advised that they should advance at once to the fort. The main body of Aguirre's

people were without the walls, looking to see what would be the success of this detachment; but seeing the revolt, they thought all hope was over, and that not a moment was to be lost in securing their own pardon; with this intent they all advanced. Aguirre thought they were going to attack the enemy, but he saw them mingle in the ranks, and heard them shout out, "The King for ever!" *

Juan de Aguirre still remained in the fort, and intended to complete his crimes by killing the tyrant, whose ready instrument he had been in so many murders; but not finding him at hand, and thinking all delay dangerous, he hastened to join Paredes; and while Aguirre was outside of the fort, all the others, who were now only those whom he suspected, and kept under watch, got out by a door which had been closed up, but which they broke through. One alone, of all the Marañones,

* P. Simon, *6. 5. 1. 2.*

remained by Aguirre's side; it was Llamoso: none of these wretches had exceeded him in guilt, but he was faithful to the last to the tyrant whom he had sworn to serve. Aguirre asked him why he also did not go to enjoy the King's pardon; he replied, he had been his friend in life, and would be so in death. Aguirre made him no answer, but went into a chamber where his daughter was sitting in company with a young woman called La Torralva, who had come with her from Peru. "Say thy prayers, child," said he, "for I must kill thee!" "Why, sir?" she exclaimed. He replied, "That thou mayst never live to be reviled, and called the daughter of a traitor." La Torralva had courage enough to rise and take his harquebuss from him, thinking thus to prevent him from executing his desperate purpose; but he, lightly surrendering it, drew out a dagger, and stabbed his daughter repeatedly, till her sufferings were for ever ended. Then going out into the anti-chamber, he per-

ceived that the king's troops were entering, and leaning against a sort of cane-bed-stead, without attempting to resist, he waited for what might befal him. An inhabitant of Tocuyo, who first came into the room, called to Paredes, "Here, sir, I have taken Aguirre." The tyrant answered, "I do not yield to such a knave as thou art!" and then seeing Paredes himself, he added, "Sir Camp-master, you are a cavalier, I beseech you let the terms be kept with me, for I have things to communicate which are of importance to the King's service." But his own men cried out that it was for the Camp-master's honour to cut off his head before the Governor came up, upon which two of these Marañones were ordered to shoot him. Juan de Chaves and Christoval Galindo are said to have put themselves forward for this service, that Aguirre might not have time to make confessions which would show how greatly they were implicated in the atrocities that had been committed.

The first shot made only a slant wound: "That's badly done," said he; the second he received in his breast, and exclaiming, "This will do," fell*, and died imme-

*The account which Gomberville gives of Aguirre's proceedings from the time of his leaving Margarita, contains nothing but what is false, except the death of his daughter. From the island, he says, he went to Cumana, where he killed all who opposed him, and committed unheard-of cruelties; then he laid waste the whole coast of Caraccas, and all the provinces which are on the rivers Venezuela and Baccho. Then he went to Santa Martha, where he killed every thing. Entering the Nuevo Reyno next, he was brought to action, and defeated; and finding it impossible to effect his escape, he put his daughter to death. Soon after this last crime he was made prisoner, and sent to the island of Trinidad, where he had great possessions; there he was tried, condemned, and broken on the wheel; and his houses there were razed, and the ground sown with salt, (pp. 57. 60.) With such utter disregard of facts has history sometimes been written!

Condamine, who it might have been thought would have been interested in tracing the history of Aguirre, as the second navigator of the great river, which he himself descended, seems to have followed Gomberville in the little that he says of him:—"*Ursua périt par la main d'Aguirre, soldat rebelle, qui se fit*

diately.* Custodio Hernandez, a wretch who had enjoyed his favour, then cut off his head, and taking it by the long hair, carried it to the Governor, in hopes of obtaining something by such a service.

Paredes then advanced to meet the Governor, trailing after him the banners of the rebels. The Governor ordered Aguirre's daughter to be buried in the church; his own body was quartered, and the quarters set up by the way-side. His head was sent to Tocuyo, and exposed in an iron cage. When Pedro Simon wrote, the skull was still remaining; his banners also were preserved in that city, and the robe, gown, and kirtle of yellow silk which his daughter had on when she was slain, rent by the dagger, and stained with blood.

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déclarer Roi. Celui-ci descendit ensuite la rivière, et après une longue route, qui n'est pas encore bien éclaircie, ayant porté en tous lieux le meurtre et le brigandage, il finit par être écartalé dans l'isle de la Trinité."—Relation Abrégée, p. 11.

* P. Simon, 6. 51. 2. 4.

The people of Merida and of Valencia, who were in the camp, petitioned each for one of his banners, as a memorial of their loyal services; each had a hand of the traitor given them instead, which they bore away on the point of a lance. These trophies became offensive on the way; the one was thrown into the river Motatan, the other cast to the dogs.* The banners were taken to Spain by Paredes, who hung them over his † father's monument.‡ The house in which he was born was pulled down, as having been the birth-place of a traitor, and a monument was erected on the spot, to record his crimes and his fate.

Collado observed his promises to the

* P. Simon, 6. 51. 4.

† Diego Garcia de Paredes, a hero of the ruffian breed, famous in his day, of whom a most characteristic account, written by himself, is to be found annexed to the *Chronica del Gran Capitan Gonzalo Hernandez de Cordova.* Alcales, 1584.

‡ Pizarro y Orellano, p. 416.

Marañones with exemplary honour.* But in the ensuing year, orders came from Madrid to send them all prisoners to Spain. They had had time to secure themselves. Paniagua, the provost-marshal, was however apprehended, and quartered at Merida, he having been one of the greatest criminals; and Llamoso suffered the same fate at Pamplona. The royal audience of

* Piedrahita has some villainous remarks upon Pablo Collado's good conduct in observing his word; they are worthy of notice, as the sentiments of a Spanish bishop at the close of the 17th century, sanctioned and approved by the censors of the press:

"*Mas cuerda resolucion huviera parecido la de no preferir el cumplimiento de su palabra a la conveniencia general, que interesaba el Reyno, en que no lo infestasse tan infame semilla. Faltando el Gran Capitan a la seguridad que le tenia dada al Duque Valentin, acredito en las escuelas de prudencia, que no debiò temer el descredito de faltar a su promessa por apagar el tizon, que occasionaba los incendios de Italia. Y si en el salvo-conduto que diò a Lutero, nuestro Emperador Carlos V. huviera atendido a este exemplar de tan cuerdo vassallo, ni huviera padecido tantas persecuciones la Iglesia, ni tan grande monarca necesitara de ocurrir a los Tribunales de la vanidad para encontrar la disculpa.*" P. 586.

Santa Fe made diligent search to apprehend others, and six were discovered on their way to Peru. Carrion, Susaya, and Tirado were among them; they were sent on to the kingdom whither they were journeying, and executed there.*

Aguirre's crimes made a deep impression upon the people of Venezuela. There was something marked as well as monstrous in his character. The rebellion was the better remembered for its wild and unconnected nature; and because no dramatic fable was ever brought to a more distinct and tragic catastrophe. Aguirre is still spoken of in those countries by the name of *El Tyrano*.. the tyrant; and it is the belief of the people, that his spirit, as restless now as when it animated his body, still wanders over the scenes of his guilt, in the form of that fiery vapour which is frequently seen in the island of Margarita, and in the *Llanos*,

* P. Simon, 6. 52. 4. Herrera. Hist. Gen. l. 9. c. 13.

or plains of New Andalusia. And this visible but intangible phenomenon is called in those countries, at this day, the Soul of the Tyrant.*

* Humboldt, Personal Narrative, vol. ii. 220. vol. iv. 193.

THE END.

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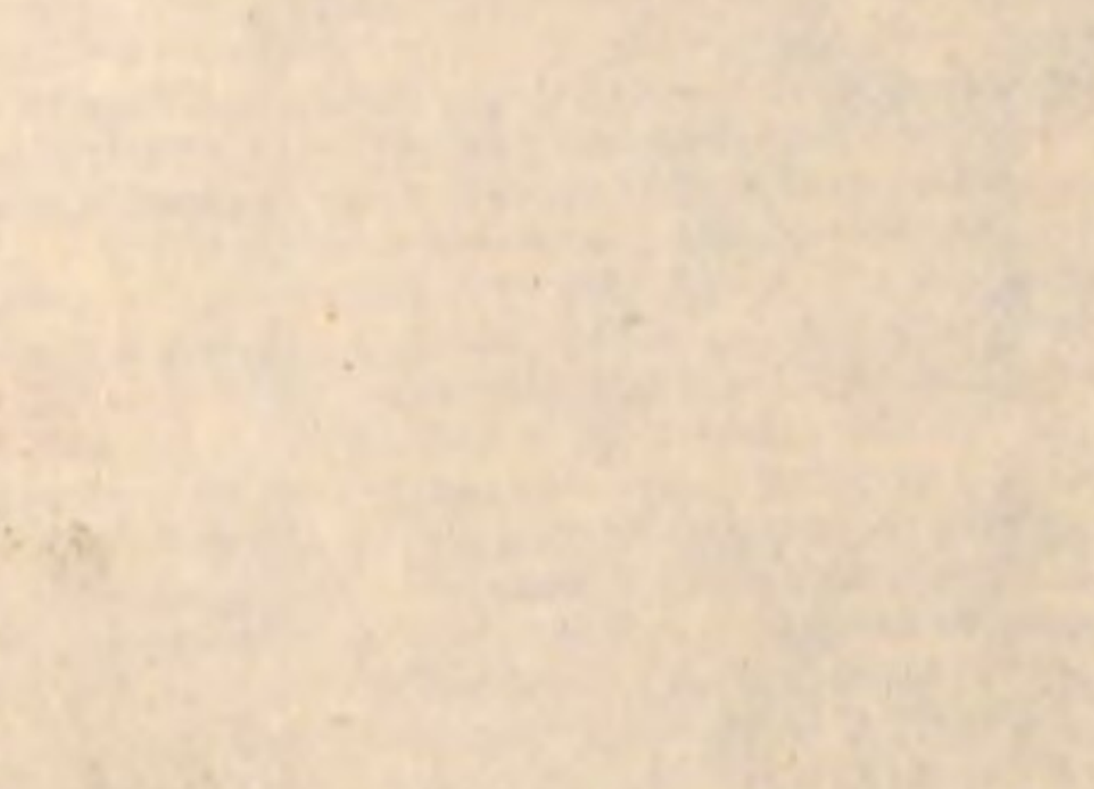

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